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THE
LAWYERS IN LOVE,

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THE LAWYERS IN LOVE;

OR,

PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE

OF

A CHANCERY BARRISTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"CAVENDISH," "THE PORT ADMIRAL," "WILL WATCH,"

&c. &c. &c.

"Love's a soldier!"—"No, he's not."
"Love's a sailor!"—"No such lot."
"Love's a doctor!"—"I deny it."
"Love's a parson!"—"Go and try it."
"S'ith, then, Love be none of these,
Sits Love in the Common Pleas?"
"Love's a jury in himself,—
Love's a pris'ner ta'en by pelf;
Love alone will never spurn ye,
If ye make him your attorney;
While in love alone, we see
The advocate without a fee!"

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I

LONDON:

JAMES COCHRANE, PUBLISHER,

128, CHANCERY LANE.

1844.

DEDICATORY EPISTLE

TO

LIEUT. HENRY W. DAVENPORT

H. M. 39th REGIMENT.

DEAR DAVENPORT,

THOUGH our last night in the Temple was rather a merry one, I doubt not you may still remember in my crazy old chambers that

“Sigh to every blast.”

Nota bene, I do not mean swearing so, —a certain quaint mysterious closet by the fire-place of the sanctum, one that with ideas more military than legal, you suggested could only have been built for holding a hookah—and that Turkish measure, an oka of tobacco. So studiously placed out

of general observation, so hermetically sealed, so industriously painted over, for the last half century—more or less,—and which, had we not been more agreeably occupied, we should there and then have rudely violated and laid open:—would that we had. Not an ill-dressed dinner, and when you consider that supernumerary nuisance, the winter assizes, you may suppose they are his legion—fallen to my lot since your departure for India, but this ill-omened receptaculum has presented itself in my visions under each shape and form,—now flying open to usher forth every annoyance, now closing upon every thing desirable; by turns containing all that was charming or atrocious;—except a hookah and an oka of tobacco, and that which was afterwards found in it.

With wonderful equanimity the foregoing torments were endured with a mere casual expression as to “Davenport’s den,” that

need not be repeated. At last a certain captivating nymph, with hair of raven tint, and a most cerulean pair of eyes, took up her abode in your lair. At first, I confess, my sense of propriety was dreadfully shocked at the bare idea of a lady in chambers; but having resolved to lay the blame on you, I grew speedily reconciled, hummed “Good St. Antony,” and dropped asleep. Judge of my horror and surprise: the nymph returned, a nymph no more! her hair had grown as grey as my wig, and her eyes those of a great grandmother. To be haunted by such an apparition was insupportable. Within six hours the carpenter’s chisel had laid open the spectral closet, and there, beneath a pile of most congenial dust, was found a bulky manuscript!

Not to detain you from those recondite studies which we know all regimental officers, in India especially, so intensely pursue, I may briefly state, that having made

every fruitless inquiry for the writer of the MS., I took leave to pillage from several others therein contained the following passage or story.

Perchance before this page can find its way to you, at whatever "pore" or "lore" the gallant 39th may now repose, after adding the well-earned laurels of Gwalior to their previous shrubbery of "the sacred tree," that purchase or promotion, by giving you your company, may hasten your return. In such a case it is not impossible that in your wanderings from Indus to the Thames, you may stumble on the rightful auto-biographer, from whose records the following tale has been abstracted. Should you prove thus fortunate, you may consider yourself empowered to make a certain amount of restitution, inasmuch as I am perfectly willing to resign the honour of the copyright, when any shall arise, provided only that the author ask not for the money, which of course has long been spent.

Should any demur be made to this even-handed justice, you can refer to the history of British India; you can explain to the wretched writer how superlatively well off he may consider himself; you can quote the well-known precedent of the Ameers of Scinde, which has lately been recognized even in our own Court of Exchequer; and when all fails—but in my days of H. M. service, failure was the only thing considered impossible—a consideration that in the 39th must meet with such perfect favour that we will adjourn all further discussion of it till our next sitting in the Temple; and with the warmest hopes that the fates may fix this at an early date,

I am ever,

Dear Davenport,

Your attached Friend,

W. JOHNSON NEALE.



THE
LAWYERS IN LOVE,

&c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

"Love rules the court."—SCOTT.

As is well known to the little circle of which through life I have formed a part, I was born of an old Northumberland family, which some four or five centuries since, possessed more land than learning, but which, in my unfortunate dynasty, has survived to possess more learning than land.

Now, though an admirer of letters myself, it has ever appeared to me, that, in the present age of the world, the above is rather

an unfortunate conjunction; but, not to be guilty of the folly of moralizing, it will suffice to say, that so it was. Howbeit, though but a younger son myself, my father, who had done all he could to shatter the remains of an ancestral house, by the madness of contesting several county elections, felt keenly how much he had injured his family by not making to its welfare, any sacrifice of his own feelings; and, therefore, he warmly advised me to make up for his neglect, by a very considerable sacrifice of mine.

Had I been allowed to pursue the even tenor of my way, any of the seven family livings in my father's gift would have made me as happy as a Plantagenet. Content on my eight hundred a year, I should have known myself protected from that master curse of mankind, the cheating mockery of ambition, and, happy in the pursuits of that darling gift of our Creator, a book, should have done my best to have discharged my duty in that station of life to which I was called, and so cared nothing who was Master of the Rolls, or who weighed down

with the onerous custody of the Great Seal.

Let me confess it, too, that though not aspiring, I was still a dreamer, but I dreamed, perhaps, of a more deceitful following than the smiles of princes—transient and dangerous as these have so often proved. I dreamed, in short, to the fullest extent, the intoxicating and perilous dream of love; and with all my visions of a snug rectory, and a well stored library, there was inexplicably mixed up, a remarkably elegant and well dressed specimen of the fair sex, all smiles and beauty; never by any possibility out of temper, and still delighted at any hour, night or day, to lay her hand on the very volume I wanted, and taking in it quite as much interest as myself.

One who would either read by my side, or silently follow the mazes of her needle, at such times as it suited me not to speak to her, and who, when my soul grew satisfied with abstruser matters, would cheerfully put by her work, sing me some exquisite song, accompanying herself like an angel on the piano, tell me some witty

and entertaining story, or hop with me round the room—for to these lively excesses I must fain confess me deeply partial—one who would not consider it too great a descent from her dignity to visit the sick or darn my hose; or attend to the general cares of the household, while I mended the backs and spines of invalid chairs, or sawed off the uneven legs of rheumatic tables.

Now, such beings there are in the world, I know, because I have happened to meet with them; but, whether before or after my marriage, or in the possession of other men instead of myself, is a matter not to the point. But after all, much as such a character seems to require from the party, there is very little more than one virtue required to form it, namely, great docility, combined with some little general aptness, it is true; but thousands of us possess that, if we only choose to cultivate it. However, such being my queen image for a lady love, where will it be supposed did I look for the reality?

At this distance of time I can scarcely

help laughing at the want of perspicacity in my search; I not only sought, but actually imagined I had found my treasure, in the youngest and most beautiful daughter of a neighbouring Marquis. It will be naturally concluded that we were both children at the time of this folly. This was not quite so, for I myself was on the point of taking my Bachelor's degree at Christ Church, Oxford, of which I was then a gentleman pensioner, and the deity whom I had elected to worship was already one-and-twenty.

It will be said immediately that we were a couple of simpletons, whose heads had been turned by reading romances. Let me do the unfortunate and ill-treated romance writers the justice to say, I never had the slightest penchant for any literature of that kind, while, as for my Dulcinea, she would much sooner have thought of reading Xenophon's *Anabasis*, in the original Greek, a work with which she was thoroughly acquainted, and could either read or quote with ease, as I frequently afterwards found to my cost.

But this is forestalling the narrative. I have already said my father wished me to repair, at my cost, the ravages caused by his elections in the family estate, and was, on every possible opportunity, perpetually dunning into my ear, the immense glory that must inevitably result to the family name and fame, if I would make a proper use of the reputation I had earned at my college, as a hard-headed reader, by repairing to the classic shades of Lincoln's Inn, and there winning—only a Peerage—at the small cost of all the happiness I might ever hope to enjoy.

My father and myself had many points on which to differ in opinion, and this fancy of his did not tend to increase the amity between us ; but, though I laughed at his Peerage, blushed at his encomiums of my collegiate powers, and almost resolved in despair, purposely to take a bad degree, he still persisted in those notions which were to me worse than “the damnable doctrine of the Pope,”* touching which, as

* Part of the formula of the barrister's oath on being called to the Bar.

a barrister, he so ardently desired my oath of abjuration. At last, when he found how determinately I shrank from the gladiatorial labours of the Bar, he turned suddenly upon me one day, after dinner, shortly before my return to Oxford, and begged to enquire what were my notions for myself.

In an unguarded hour, deceived by his calm tone of voice, at that moment I confessed to my longing for the well-known rectory of E—, the house of which abutted on our park, and contained a most splendid library, while the stipend was large, and the duties light:—a propitious mingling of circumstances it is not in the heart of churchmen coldly to regard.

Many gentlemen have, I doubt not, in times past, witnessed bursts of fury from their worthy sires, equal to that which now greeted me, but I hope not from such slight cause. The end of the matter, however, came to this, Sir John positively declared, that nothing should ever induce him to present me with a single living in the family; and, moreover, if I insisted on dedicating myself to the church, or as he

termed it, "chose to cultivate the indulgencies of a monk instead of the ambition of a gentleman," it should be done wholly at my expense, for that he would not be at the cost of helping me through my ordination fees, or giving me one farthing to aid my "beggarly curate's stipend," as he called it, after I should get into orders. My first inclination was to persist in my own plan, merely to prove that I would not be dictated to; luckily, however, I had the wit to hold my tongue. After this climax in the family argument, in a few minutes reason so far came to my aid, as to point out this undeniable fact, that taking orders in the church was, in truth, like little else in this world, namely, it was irrevocable; this resolved me, and begging my father to take upon himself the responsibility of having kept out from the sacred pale, one whose chief anxiety was to devote his life to its service, I admitted that, after his violent opposition, nothing remained for me but to accede to his wishes; and that, therefore, as Peer and Chancellor I must be made, instead of

remaining a quiet churchman, I was ready to submit with a good grace to my hard fate.

On this topic I was doomed to hear a great deal about the excellent fortune and great good luck, which I ought to esteem the opening of such an opportunity ; but I confess, to my mind, that there is no luck like that of being able to please oneself, and when a man asks me to oblige him, I always make a point of doing it, not in my way, but in his own, if I mean to oblige him at all ; and, if I do not, why I will have nothing to do with the matter.

But there are some excellent people in this world, who, though always professing themselves anxious and delighted to oblige their friends, yet never think fit to do so in the way in which those friends wish, but always after some style peculiar to themselves ; a pestilent kind of good nature, to which I have the utmost aversion. This style of good nature was my father's.

CHAPTER II.

“Love is that species of madness for which, as yet, no philanthropist has been found kind enough to build an asylum.”—DOCTOR ADAM.

AT the time that my father, Sir John—for to this genus the baronet belonged—came to this selfish determination of making me happy after his own fashion, I had already been foolish enough to engage myself with the lady to whom I have alluded, and therefore before, going any farther, I may as well give some short description of her person and connexions.

Near to my father's house is the romantic and well-known Castle of Sardem. The family to which this belonged, had been as nearly ruined, as it is well possible for the proprietor of an entailed estate to be, by contesting the county with my father, who,

happening to have the whole bulk of his property within the county, and therefore more favourably placed than was that of his noble opponent, could fight the game of pride and folly at infinitely less expense. The result of the struggle being, that while the Earl of * * * was rendered an utter cripple, my father was only lamed for life. When, however, the difficulties of the nobleman arrived at such a pitch, that he could no longer maintain the munificent hospitality, that had so long rendered the fact of his residence a blessing to every poor cotter near him, he was obliged to take himself and young family to the comparative discomfort of a continental residence; and his castle being let to the well-known Marquis O'Mortgage, who, with an Irish title, had immense English estates, together with an English barony, and an unaccountable quantity of debt, the industrious and deserving of the poor population found, to their cost, that the treasury, hitherto open to all the claims of sickness and humanity, had been exhausted by the dissolute and debauched corruption of a

crew of scoundrel voters ; and yet the absent Earl was a man not at all wanting in either ability to discern an evil, or the good principle to remedy it.

Melancholy is it, then, that the state of our law opens to the rich a temptation to squander, in an absurd strife for power, that wealth which is entrusted to them for all the nobler uses of charity and improvement, and which is thus diverted from these channels, where it might be employed with such godlike effect, to be wasted in the pursuit of a questionable shadow,—devoted to gluttony, prostituted to drunkenness, or rendered criminal by the illegal corruption of minds too uneducated, or too poor to resist its degrading influence.

And yet, while all these evils are curable by the simple remedy of the Ballot, well meaning men can be found too timid to apply that efficacious axe to the root of so overwhelming an evil ! To return, however : when the Marquis O'Mortgage came into my father's neighbourhood, the coolness that had existed between the Park and the Castle vanished in an instant. The

Marquis and my father were of the same politics ; that I could have pardoned them. The Marquis had a far greater sin in my eyes, namely, he possessed three of the loveliest daughters it is possible to conceive ; and never dreaming that there would dare to aspire to these a younger brother, whose only portion was a beggarly two hundred a-year under his mother's settlement, the Marquis, who was a jovial widower, longing to marry a second time, if his daughters would let him, encouraged the greatest intimacy between the two families.

The Lady Isabella—that was the name of my fair enslaver—was, as I have already said, the youngest ; she had the loveliest blue eyes and black hair—a combination of charms, by the way, which all her sisters enjoyed as well as herself—it is possible to conceive. It is an Irish style of beauty, and with it she inherited all that vivacity and wit for which her country is notorious. I was riding one day, soon after the Marquis' arrival in our country—I well remember it was a warm sunny July day, the hour about

two o'clock. After a long delicious canter through some very favourite scenery, I was returning home to luncheon, with an intent of going over what is called the Home Farm, and had just left the Rectory-house of E——, where, as I confess was often my custom, 'I used to loſunge in as a viſiter upon my venerable friend the incumbent, and ſitting in his eaſy chair, in the bow window of his library, which commanded an exquisite view of the winding river—coolly map out the plan of my future life, when the rectory ſhould come into my poſſeſſion, and the gentleman beſide me, “ after life's fitful fever, ſhould ſleep well.” Now, on this day in particular, the devil had ſeduced me into a long and delicious reverie, wherein I fully agreed with myſelf as to the amount of my “ innocent amuſements,” my ſtyle of life, my mode of doing duty, my reſources againſt *ennui*, the particular ſtyle of literature in which my firſt book ſhould be written, for I had always taken it as a matter of courſe that I ſhould turn author. Every thing, in ſhort, I had planned out with the greateſt nicety and precision; and, finally, I had con-

cluded that nothing was wanted for my entire felicity, but that dear delightful being whose required qualities I have already enumerated, and who would render trebly delightful all my enjoyments by the simple act of sharing them.

Under these circumstances, it can be easily imagined, that my peculiar temperament had led me to form certain very definite notions, as to every thing that related to one who was to prove the great charmer of my life—her shape, her voice, her temper—all these little minor matters I had settled with the most perfect certainty, and even of her features I had a sort of vague but still fixed notion—a sort of dream-like image of the countenance, the character of which would at once argue its owner to possess those qualities of mind, that I especially desired. And, as I sat in the arm-chair of the aforesaid library, I mentally resolved to be in no hurry, but to take my time, and sedulously devote myself, to searching out just such a being as I required. With regard to money, said I, *sotto voce*, I have long been of opinion that a thousand,

or at most fifteen hundred a-year, is the happiest of all possible incomes. The very smallness of the amount, peremptorily forbids its owner from entertaining any absurd or ridiculous notions of ambition or grandeur; and while it compels him to adopt that sphere of life in which the domestic virtues most flourish, secures to him all the comforts and refinements of life—provides for contingencies, guards him from all sorrows of poverty—by far the worst in the calendar, except those of guilt—and leaves him wherewithal to help a friend at will. Fifteen hundred a-year, then, I was resolved my income should not exceed. Now the Rectory of E—— was worth just twelve hundred pounds per annum; my allowance under my mother's will, as I have before estimated, was two hundred more, and the odd hundred I might easily leave to the chapter of accidents, or to any allowance made by my father; or—splendid alternative of an independent mind—learn to do without it.

This, then, was quite clear, provided I could find those qualities of mind on which

I built my happiness, I could afford to marry without a penny of fortune, and esteem it no slight or trivial blessing to escape all that wrangle and jangle about the odious question of settlements, of which *I had the fullest benefit at home, whenever it pleased any of my sisters to wed, or my elder brother to take on a new flirtation.* Sweet St. Mark be praised! I have no title to support, I uttered, at this last part of my argument, heartily disgusted at the perpetual prompting made by my father, of the necessity of my brother marrying a great heiress, to keep up the title, or support the family position, or secure the county, or some other atrocity, equally degrading in my eyes. The devil is not an electioneerer, or he certainly might have carried the county hollow for me. As for the family position, I no doubt felt thankful that I had been well born; or, in other words, that Providence had for a number of years been so kind in its good gifts, that my ancestors had been rich enough to keep up the tradition of from whom they sprang; for, nurse ourselves

in pride and folly as we will, the love of ancestry can amount to little more than this. To be proud of our descent from illustrious men, or rather to be glad of it, is certainly an emotion of a well-framed mind; but the mere rejoicing over a genealogical fact, of being able to trace one's descent through a long line of nobodies, is a puerility for which even a child ought to be whipped; since this must be clear to the weakest intellect, that all mankind must have had fathers and mothers up to the very hour of creation; so much for my father's argument as to family. I do confess I like to look on the shield my ancestor bore at Agincourt, and the only heir-loom I coveted was the sword of the French Count he there slew in single combat; but, for the rest, I was fully resolved the "family position" should never disturb my domestic tranquillity.

With regard to family, however, there was one point that gave me some little trouble. Bachelors rarely are fond of children, and, associated with the bright image I had formed for my future wife,

there came considerable pain lest she should be of that fruitful stamp that should present me with a number of young Musgraves; and, therefore, if it had been possible to have found all my requisites combined in a young widow who had no children by her first husband, and was therefore likely to be equally complaisant with her second, I should to such a Phoenix, have given the preference over any spinster. But I was fearful that such a cocatenation of all my required whims and oddities, was scarcely to be hoped for; and this brings me to the point I lately mentioned, namely, my resolution to be in no hurry, but to search diligently, to choose with the utmost calmness, and, most especially, to avoid everything that might, in the least degree, resemble that foolish intoxication which men term love, and for which I entertained a feeling almost bordering on contempt. Surely, oh Blind God! thou must have more of the divinity in thy composition, than foolish mortals, ignorant of thy power, dare to admit in thy name. Bitterly in after times was I made to rue

the scorn I momentarily entertained for what I then thought thy fabled greatness!!

“ Let no one think to fly the danger,
Sooner or later, Love is his own avenger—”

However, I had not then learnt the truth of this little bit of poetry, and as I cantered along, I espied a lady, a gentleman, and a groom, riding from the Park gates towards the Hall. Now, I hate visitors—they are a class of people I detest, full of form, and froth, and emptiness, and rarely with anything hearty or jovial about them.

“ The devil take these people,” muttered I, “ who are they, I wonder? Can one never get an hour’s quiet? Ah well! it’s quite clear they are some folks coming to lunch at the Hall, and so my quiet meditated feed, I must go without.” I even thought that, hungry as I was, I would put off my chop and sherry till the hour of dinner, but I am a very methodical person, and very obstinate, and with great difficulty turned from doing any matter on which I have once made up my mind, however trifling that matter may be. More alas! is the

pity ; it may be a quality which has contributed to my advancement in life, but alas ! what have I not paid for its indulgence at various times, and even on this occasion, no inconsiderable price !

CHAPTER III.

“ There are some beings so formed for our worship, that the spirits of our souls seem to have taken part, at the incarnation of theirs.”—*APULEIUS*.

IN order to avoid the strangers, I put my horse to a canter ; confound it, the visitors did the same. I spurred mine into a gallop ; the visitors galloped too. Sweet St. Mark ! thought I, they never can be coming to see me ; but, anxious not to be guilty of the rudeness of appearing to shun my father's acquaintance, I now slackened my pace, and in a few minutes the horse of the gentleman of the strange party was by my side. Taking his hat from his head with an easy gallantry, that, by reminding me of the times of olden chivalry, went far towards conquering my heart in his favour,

the gentleman exclaimed, "Good morning, Sir; Mr. Miles Musgrave, I presume, I have the pleasure of addressing." I bowed.

"As my name is O'Mortgage," continued the stranger, "I have done myself the honour of coming over to pay my respects to your father; but, before we go in, as we are all on horseback, will you be kind enough to show me the oak that was struck by lightning last evening."

"With pleasure, my Lord," I replied, quite reclaimed from my savage mood, by the easy good nature and breeding of my companion, and turning my horse's head as he spoke, and seeing that he did not slacken rein, I at once led the way to the tree in question. Now it certainly was rude in me, although the lady was not introduced to me, to remain, as I did, seemingly unconscious of the existence of any third party; but, in reality, it was the pace at which the Marquis rode, that prevented me from looking round for the moment, and so the fact of his companion's sex, thus, in a manner, escaped me. In a few seconds we arrived at the spot, at which, only a short

time since, an unfortunate labourer had met his death from lightning, and where the ruins of the mighty monarch of the forest still littered the sward on all sides. In order to indulge public curiosity—rather a questionable benevolence by the way—my *father had prohibited the removal of any portion of the tree for a week*; and there the splendid wreck remained, massive and mournful vestiges and evidence of the fury of the elements; while the air around, breathed a calm, as peaceful, as if it were utterly impossible that anything could ruffle the serenity of the skies. The oak itself, lay buried in a little dell; besides our own panting steeds, not a trace of humanity could be detected as far as the eye could reach. On gaining this spot we all, with one accord, slackened bit, and turning momentarily around, as some one rode up beside me, I started with more agitation than if a second thunderbolt had fallen at my side.

And what was this alarming sight? Alas! nothing more horrible than a young girl's face, but such a face! Never before had I,

with all my dreamings, imaginings, and actual experiences—and as a great admirer of female beauty, I had at various times gone somewhat out of my path to gaze on it!—but never, I say, had I believed it possible that simple human features could make anything that I deemed half so perfect.

The first thought that struck me was the fact, that the possessor of that countenance stood confessed before me, as the very person whose character must, of necessity, contain the exact ingredients that I sought. She seemed, already, actually to belong to me, so much so, as almost to be a part of my own proper being, and this was just the interest she inspired.

When I first turned round, I could plainly discern from that countenance, that it seemed made to express, in the most legible characters, every thought that passed across the mind. I could plainly read upon that exquisite index, the marks of beauty, conscious of having been most improperly slighted, but also quite confident that her hour of vengeance was at hand; then, as she beheld the startling effect—

for a woman's eye is unfailing in the perusal of such truths—as she beheld the startling effects of her own beauty upon myself, a smile of triumph suddenly lighted up those eyes, and I was already forgiven.

“I beg your pardon,” said the Marquis, “I forgot when introducing myself, Mr. Musgrave, to confer the same favour on my daughter, Lady Isabella Dunvext;” and while the Marquis amused himself with admiring the oak, I amused myself with admiring the Lady Isabella, and well, in truth, I might, for never yet was being more formed to command admiration.

The ride, the warm and delightful morning, the thousand and one sunny influences about us, had left us both in too dangerous a mood to be at all safe in each other's society. And, oh! silly old widower that you were, why in the name of all the Mortgages did you come plaguing me, Most Noble Marquis, on the morning in question, to perfect the unhappiness of two unfortunate young people?

Neither the Marquis nor his daughter were very learned on matters electrical, but

much that was known on the subject at that moment, I happened to know; having amused myself at the Rectory in scanning over a treatise in the Encyclopedia on the very subject, my attention being called to it by the melancholy death the night before, I now kindly gave the Marquis and his daughter all the benefits of my recent studies; and, in short, came out as, what is generally termed, a well informed young man.

On the way home, little passed between myself and Lady Isabella, except that the notion more than once again presented itself, that she was the very person I was seeking, and that it might not be amiss to consider to what extent it was possible to win her good graces. It is true, a sort of internal misgiving crossed me on two points.

Perfect, almost, as the expression of her countenance was, I could not, as a physiognomist, exclude from my own mind the evident tendency towards a will of her own, which some of the features developed. And, again, intoxicated as I felt already

with her beauty, prudence had not yet so entirely left me, but that the old gentleman could still be heard, now and then, very painfully whispering, that the daughter of a Marquis was hardly a suitable match for a younger brother, whose way was yet to make in the world, and who merely sought domestic happiness, and entertained a thorough contempt for ambition.

Still, I muttered to myself, it is quite evident that that face belongs to a clever woman,—and a clever woman, whatever her rank, must always be accessible to reason. Now, it is also quite evident, that no reasonable woman who loves the man to whom she is united, can fail to know all the happiness that is permitted to mankind on an income of fifteen hundred a year; more especially when her rank is so positive and undeniable, that she may always command any class of society for which she has a fancy, more especially in the country, at comparatively little expense. The case was well argued, and the appeal being to myself, little wonder that I gave it in my own favour, and that of the lady aforesaid.

I, for myself, deciding, that beautiful as the lady seemed in my eye, there was no necessity for running away for luncheon, as at one moment I felt tempted to do.

Daring then all the danger of her exquisitely soft glances, and revelling in the delightful thrill which they occasioned, and I then, for the first time, experienced, I entered the hall with my new acquaintances, assisted the Lady Isabella to dismount, offered her my arm to the dining-room, and sat down with her father and herself to luncheon.

Now, it so chanced, that no one was at home, except Sir John. He and the Marquis had met once at a public meeting, and as this was his Lordship's first call, our worthy sires had no end of chit chat with which to indulge themselves. My father was both a good speaker and an excellent listener, and the Marquis was a new edition of that old and popular character, "all things to all men." They speedily got on that eternal subject, the politics of their neighbours; it was nearly an hour before his Lordship ordered his horses; and I who

had, in the meantime, indulged to the utmost in my admiration of Lady Isabella's beauties, fully made up my mind that she certainly did possess every quality which I desired, instinctively directed my nag to be likewise produced, and offered to show our visiter the very spot where, last season, the celebrated Sir Breakneck Anscul made the most singular leap recorded in the county annals, and which spot lay on the road to the Castle, by a ride of great beauty.

The Marquis was delighted; he possessed all an Irishman's love of the turf, and never hunted more than six days a week, and very rarely less than five. I had very often heard Lady Isabella quoted as a most spirited horsewoman, and no man more admired or more delighted to ride near one than I. But this, however, was not very often, for I thought a passion for the field incompatible with the duties that lay before me, and so took every opportunity in my power, of mortifying the lusts of the flesh in this particular. At any rate, we had all an inclination for the same amusement, and, in the highest possible spirits, off we set.

I saw the Marquis was a violent politician, and, in order to have his daughter, I saw it was necessary to have him. As we rode along, I gave him one or two of the most amusing political *petites histoires* I could remember. The Marquis was heartily amused, and having shewn him where the leap took place, I was about to take my leave, when, imprudent man, nothing less would serve him than asking home to dinner “*en garçon*,” as he said, the very youth whom he ought most carefully to have excluded from his very threshold.

Alas, it is the very nature of man to be perpetually falling into these blunders, and I was equally foolish in allowing myself to accept the invitation. Had I been the prudent fellow the world generally gave me credit for being, I should instantly have put spurs to my horse, and never have rested till I gained in safety my college at Oxford. When the Marquis gave me the invitation, I felt it was perfect ruin to accept it, and at first declined.

“Pooh, pooh!—O, nonsense!” said the hospitable Irishman, speaking out, “What

should prevent your taking compassion on a poor lone widower, a gay bachelor like you, entirely your own master, and able to do as you like? But I see how it is: you are afraid I should get hold of your electioneering stories, and then you will have some one to tell them beside yourself."

At this juncture, I unfortunately looked at the Lady Isabella's long eyelashes; and that which should have given me courage to fly the danger, only the more completely bewitched me in rushing on. The groom was sent back to the hall for my carpet bag.—After dinner, some excursions were projected for the following day, and a bed at the Castle followed as a matter of course. On the following morning, by some extraordinary legerdemain, I found myself walking on one of the terraces on which the breakfast room opened, with the Lady Isabella! to be sure it was only while I gathered a rose for her; but woe to the man, who, wishing to fly the charms of any particular *demoiselle*, dares to encounter her in all the light and easy grace of a morning dress, presiding over the hōspi-

talities of the early day! The other visitors are not down—the father is arranging *battu* with the bailiff—mamma is in the middle of her toilette—the brother is looking at his dogs—the sister feeding the olden denizens of the fountain. By some magic or another a *tête-à-tête* is certain to spring up. Then, too, the vile annoyances of the day have as yet left the spirit undisturbed, and the mind is open to receive the very gentlest and most touching impressions as to female divinity. O! 'tis a most dangerous hour! However—after breakfast, the Lady Isabella and myself played at billiards—that was another most imprudent flying in the face of fortune—but Lady Isabella was the youngest child; and, let it be confessed, not a little of a pet. The eldest daughter was busy playing the hostess to her father's guest. The second had a flirtation of her own to manage, and thus “the dear child” and myself were resigned to all the perils into which youthful blood could rush.

As for me, my case was speedily settled; when luncheon was over, and we rode out to the appointed spot, I was fully per-

suaded that there never was a more extraordinary *rencontre* between a man and all he most desired, than that which had just occurred in my own case ; and thus, to shorten a long story, we went on day after day, meeting and confirming sentiments that had arisen between us, until at length, even I, although it is notorious that I am the perfection of prudence, hardly knew whether my present style of walking was mostly on my head or my heels. In this confused state of affairs, is it to be wondered at that I ventured to sound Isabella's ideas on the subject of Rectories, Dorcas Societies, visiting the sick, and other matters incidental to the position which I was quite convinced she, beyond all others, was destined to fill. On all these matters the Lady Isabella's answers and predilections were most gratifying. And although she had been brought out—although she had gone through all the pollutions of a season at Almack's, she was still sufficiently enthusiastic—I am afraid it ought to be called foolish—to vow eternal affection, and be resolved to share my fortunes !

Still, as we both well knew that her father expected her to form some alliance more after the usual style of Right Honourable ladies, we agreed, young dissemblers as we were, to keep our little predilections strictly to ourselves; and, in order to do this, I was to pay the same attentions to her sister as I did to herself. The father, who thought decidedly that I was a safety coach, and who, as all elderly gentlemen will, had taken a fancy to a young man who evidently felt great pleasure in his society, and spared no pains to amuse him, fell from this, into the error of believing that my visits were made only to himself.

Thus then matters proceeded, and for a prudent young gentleman, I had got myself into as pretty a scrape as could readily be imagined. Still Isabella seemed perfectly satisfied with her prospects in life; and, though I often ask myself whether it was not more than cruel, with my experience, to run the risk of leading her into such a fearful dilemma, still my book philosophy, which always leads us astray, unless

*it is corrected by the 'actual tutelage of life—I say whenever, the real truth suggested itself to my mind, my philosophy always found a ready answer in the persuasion that I was, in all probability, leading the fair Isabella to a far happier destiny, as the adored wife of a humble commoner, than could ever be her lot as the more splendid bride of some *passé* peer, or the neglected partner of some sated *roué*. Moreover, this important fact was never to be overlooked, that, come what might, I had now obtained her first warm affections, and that to divert these into any fresh channel, must at any rate, be a matter of very great pain, if not an impracticability. The equivalent benefit of which must be very doubtful.*

CHAPTER IV.

“The worst misfortune in our life’s miscarriage,
Is to contract “a most imprudent marriage.”—ADAM.

LOVE, we all know, is ever checquered by some annoyances, and, if they arise not from matters of fact, it is inevitable that they should burst into existence on points of feeling; and thus, though in those days of wooing all external circumstances went most fairly, yet I had many bitter hours from the reflections to which I have alluded.

When, however, my father suddenly disturbed so many of my dreams by his resolute protest against the church, before returning to Oxford, I sought an interview with the Lady Isabella, and communicated to her what I thought could not but prove

a most important change in our future destiny.

My surprise, however, was great, when that beautiful and laughter-loving person received notice of her being changed from the humble and unaspiring lady of the parsonage, to the striving and ambitious wife of a contentious lawyer, with great satisfaction. At first I took this to be an amiable hypocrisy, to make me feel the blow less, but when I found that such was the actual feeling in Isabella's mind, I still blinded myself as to the real deduction I ought to have made, and only felt the compliment to my vanity conveyed in the fact that, though the church, as a profession for her husband, held out no peculiar charms for her, she had been still willing, nevertheless, for my sake, to give into it.

Thus it is, then, that we perpetually hoodwink our eyes; Isabella still professed and evinced an unaltered state of feeling towards me, and I returned, to lessen what difficulties remained on my part, by taking the highest degree in my power at Oxford. Here fortune stood my friend; I gained

more than I could possibly expect, and with loud encomiums for past exertion at the *University*, and great prognostication of future honours at the Bar, the grand step was taken. The Benchers of Lincoln's Inn called me to the degree of "Utter Barrister" of their honourable society?—now then came the struggle.

Knowing how much depended on myself, I had taken care, since the law was forced on me, to spare no pains on my legal studies; thus still, in one point, acting "the very prudent man." As a matter of course at starting, family connexions led to my having a considerable number of briefs, and I was sufficiently lucky to support the impetus thus given me in my new career.

In the course of a few terms, I heard every where of the "immense hit" I had made at the Bar, and although, perhaps in this respect, I really had experienced a smile of good luck, that does not await one man in a hundred, amid the arduous profession in which I was obliged to carry arms—yet, after all, what was it?

. In the first year I had made about three

hundred pounds, which, with my own two hundred amounted to five, and which my father's allowance increased to eight—a very decent stipend for a young man of three-and-twenty, residing in chambers, where a young man may either be extremely extravagant or extremely prudent. Still this was little or nothing wherewith to venture upon matrimony, when, to say nothing of unexpected arrivals, the whole income was based on so tottering a foundation, that a single day might lop from it my father's three hundred a-year, and ill health deprive me of my briefs.

These were serious matters which I debated at full length, again and again, with the Lady Isabella, at sundry times and in divers places, always terminating such discussions with the most unequivocal assurance of my perfect devotion and obedience to her wish, whatever it might be, my own leading me to the suggestion of patience.

And here, for the first time, the difference in our dispositions began to evince itself. I was, as I have candidly admitted fifty times, a "prudent man," and a philosophical man :

or, in other words, an obstinate man, and a determined man, and if I had set my heart upon the attainment of a point, I could, in order to secure it, have devoted a life-time a thousand times over in my resolution to succeed; not caring greatly to utter many *expressions of regard, but once feeling them, retaining them ever afterwards.* Now, Isabella, on the contrary, was all fire, vivacity, and intense effervescence; what she desired must be granted to her on the moment, or it lost all its charms!

At this period of our attachment, various difficulties had begun to cloud over the brief dawn of happiness we had so intensely enjoyed. Lady Isabella had been greatly admired in London society, where she was accounted, though it may seem vain in an old man to say so, and yet it is not, one of the most decided beauties of her time.

As a matter of course, numberless fools, who sigh for anything that others praise, crowded round with offers, most of them peers; some, it must be confessed, men whom any parent would have been most anxious to secure, and many, I have no

doubt also, poor Isabella herself must have regretted that she was not free to accept.

But a great deal of this I never heard, till it was too late to have amended my own *blunder*. *Engaged to another, of course, no alternative existed for the unfortunate girl, but to reject right and left her present admiring swains instantly, to the dismay of her father, and the wonderment of her sisters ; and though she did her best, when any opportunity occurred, of seizing upon any reason that might be urged as an excuse for her conduct, there were one or two cases so flagrant that the mere idle assertion of a girl's "don't like" could not possibly account for her conduct.* Suspicion was now aroused ; she was taxed with some engagement unknown to her family, and though, of course, she stoutly denied it, on the privileged ground, that at lover's perjuries Jove laughs ; the friends were on the alert, and I, as a prudent man, was obliged, in London, to keep as much as possible from the house, and, on meeting them in public, to redouble my attention to the other daughters.

At this juncture the elder sister married, —the bustle of which event was a great relief—but from the worry and suspense, and that irritability of mind that is the curse of *long engagements*, *Isabella* grew very ill. The real cause being hid—the frequent one was conjectured, of consumption. She was advised to travel—refused to go, and then all sorts of persecutions fell upon her!

Again and again I offered to give up our engagement, and bear the brunt of it—a sacrifice I should have felt most dreadfully—but this was declined. My practice during the second year had risen more than I could have expected beyond the first twelve months amount, and *Isabella* and myself were debating as to how far it would be safe, at once to terminate the sufferings she endured from suspense, by telling her Right Honourable father the whole amount of our enormity, and asking his forgiveness in due form.

It is true, we calculated on having a good deal of opposition to stem, but even, although I could no longer offer the humble apology of a Rectory of twelve hundred a-

year, I had no doubt my father's fondness for the politics of the Marquis, together with his own feelings of pride at his younger son gaining the hand of his powerful neighbour's child, and more especially the consideration of that neighbour's influence in parliament, which must prove a great assistance ultimately to me in my profession ; I say, I had no doubt that these various matters together, would have induced Sir John to have done something more than usually handsome, in the way of settlements and allowances ; but who shall venture to count plans that must perforce embrace, in the question of their success, the thoughts and feelings of other men, the secrets of whose hearts are necessarily locked up from us ?

The Marquis, like his daughter, was of a most mercurial temperament, and being considerably involved in money matters, these composed a sort of moral barometer, from which any one might invariably form an accurate estimate of what would be his feelings on any given day, according to the pecuniary nature of the intelligence that might that day reach him, or, *vice versa*, we might

gather from the state of his mind what was the exact pecuniary atmosphere reigning in his pocket, and this throughout any period of his existence. Now, at a certain time of the year, the Marquis was accustomed to give his head steward an audience, in order that the said steward might then inform him how his rents were coming in. When these went wrong, like one of the Ravenswood breed of wild white bulls, it was absolutely dangerous to approach him. But the girls, who had to manage his mental economy, had, with the quickness of women, discovered that this period was the crisis of his life, and whenever anything important was in hand that could be delayed, they always sounded the steward as to the nature of the annual report he was about to make, and guided themselves accordingly.

Now, on the eventful year in question, Isabella had ascertained that an unusually prosperous report would be made, and we both agreed that this was undoubtedly the opportunity to seize, for communicating to the Marquis our unfortunate attachment. This, therefore, we determined to do, but

it seemed fated that even our virtues should run against us both in this unlucky matter.

On the very day that Isabella was to break to her warm-hearted but choleric father, the intelligence that she had engaged herself to a mere cornet in the fighting ranks of fortune—on that very day, my father informed me after dinner, that he wished to call my attention to a very serious matter.

As in duty bound, I lent a most attentive ear, and, to my horror, underwent a long lecture as to the various gifts of nature made in my favour, and the various uses to which they were to be applied; and after being warmly complimented on my exertions, the success which had attended them, and so forth, Sir John informed me that those qualities which I had exhibited in my career through life hitherto, rendered it highly necessary that I should not throw a single chance away, and that I, therefore, must “marry for the good of the family.”

Oh, how I cursed the family! I was sick of the family at the very core of my heart, and verily believe that if my venerable ancestor from Agincourt had come across me

himself, he would have had *** ***, allowance, namely, hard words and hanging. While, on the other hand, had *** ***, come across my old ancestor, he would have got—but no matter, there are no hopes of that. Well, when I heard from the lips of my excellent progenitor this, to me detestable announcement, I felt that desperate sort of courage, under which even the most prudent of men have, before now, taken steps, obvious rather for their temerity than aught beside. I could endure in quiet no more this trifling with my happiness, as if I were a mere automaton, to work or to be idle, happy, or miserable, married or single, foolish or rational, as a mere political mad country Baronet might choose to dictate to me. Besides, I thought it better to crush in the bud this fancy of my father, before it could expand into a more positive form than it had yet taken.

“I am sorry, Sir,” replied I, “that you should have formed any decided feeling as to my future life, so far as it relates to marriage; for, thinking that when to please you I resigned my choice of a profession,

that you would have 'no objection to my pleasing myself in the choice of a wife, I have from your silence on the point, concluded that you had no especial object to urge in such a matter, and already have so far declared myself to a lady, that I could not consistently, and with the honour of a son of your's, draw back."

I will not paint the storm that ensued. To be brief, all my efforts to induce him to consent to my choosing for myself were vain. He vowed that no influence should lead him to overlook the want of fortune, which, I was of course obliged to confess, was one of the sins of the lady of my choice, and when I spoke of her rank counterbalancing her want of money, a perfect hurricane burst forth. To escape these horrors I now hurried off—for this happened in the country—to the Castle. It was towards the close of summer, and Lady Isabella and myself had agreed that, if her application to her father was successful, she should meet me at a favourite lime tree, to the eastward of the avenue; but that if the Marquis cut up roughly, and she did not attend the trysting

spot, in that case I was to make my arrangements to start with her that night, for the lover's desperate resort—namely, Gretna Green.

Seeing the difficulties that now presented themselves at the Hall, I was, of course, *doubly anxious that matters should, if possible, go smoothly at the Castle, since, despite all his protestations, I could hardly imagine the politician would venture to look coldly on the match, if the Marquis could once be brought to think that his daughter's happiness demanded a marriage.* Anxious as I was, it was all in vain ; on reaching the appointed lime tree I found no human being in sight of it.

I waited two hours, but no one came ; I then hastened home, and in the hope that my father's doors might receive the fugitive, when he once knew who she really was, I disclosed to him the name of his intended daughter-in-law. What was before anger was now a mixture of rage and scorn. I was told that the Marquis would be sure not only to laugh at my pretensions, but to accuse me of deep ingratitude in trepanning

the affections of his child, and that an inevitable breach would be made, in the relations between the two families, by my absurd folly ; and that even if the Marquis did consent, he, Sir John, never would, since the interest of the O'Mortgages was powerless to do much good, and that the want of a fortune in a younger son was irretrievable.

Finally, Sir John insisted that I should give up all thoughts of such a marriage, and follow only that of the "desirable young lady," of which he more than hinted that he had a very fair specimen awaiting me.

In vain I tried, like "a prudent man," to bring Sir John to a sensible view of the subject. In vain I assured him that at the utmost man only could be happy. In vain I asked him why, if my happiness consisted in private life, he should try to force me into a struggle of political pride and place, which could never allow me to know a moment's rest or enjoyment, and all for the benefit of some young sinner, not even yet in existence.

"In the first place," I said, "all your

schemes may prove abortive. This ‘ultimate success’ that you talk of, as if it were a new hat that hung behind the door of the vestry, and was to be got hold of by sharp running and long breath—this distinction you desire for the family, I may never be able to get, even if you should marry me to ‘your desirable young lady;’ I making her, perhaps, a wretched husband, and she, proving to me just as unsuitable a wife. At the Bar, the struggle in a great degree resolves itself into a competitorship of good health, and even suppose you should not have overcalculated my capacities and good luck, the whole thing may fall to the ground by a single attack of catarrh. Suppose your successful barrister laid up with an attack of ophthalmia, which would not permit him to read a book or a brief for six months or two years, and then I should be glad to know where goes your ambition? Or suppose that some private calamity befalls him, and by the weight of business and sorrow his brain reels ! . But, even if all these chances of disappointment are past, let us suppose—no impossible thing, as even you

will allow—that some electioneering trick deprives him of his seat in Parliament, where is the party which would think of a disabled follower. If you are sure to *survive yourself, Sir John, and could like to enjoy the triumph, if there is any—and certainly if there be, it is a triumph I have as yet been so unlucky as to be unable to discover—then I could conceive it were a matter worth regarding; but to give up positive happiness to one's self, for the mere chance of conferring greatness on some wretched puny offspring of a woman, wedded without love, and whose intellect, perhaps, you may despise; a mother the most probable of all to produce you offspring that must infallibly inherit your contempt with your new honours; all this appears to me to be the greatest madness in the world.* “Vain was my argument.—I could only gain one iteration of the same old story, that I was a Musgrave—that I ought—that I must—and that my family, and so forth; so, finding that no reason was to be made out of it, I rose and left the room, and apparently retired to rest. Having locked

the door, that my absence might not be discovered, I blest my stars that the long vocation had just begun ; let myself out of the bed-room window, and walked on foot to the nearest post town, and there I hired *the necessary post horses, sending four more on before, to throw as much difficulty as I could in the way of any pursuit, as well as to expedite my own course as far as possible.*

CHAPTER V.

“ It was a trying hour that which I found him,
Standing alone beside his desolate hearth,
While all his household gods lay shiver’d round him.”

BYRON.

For a brief space fortune appeared to smile. The elopement succeeded. Isabella and myself were married at Gretna, and, after the old manner of lovers, repaired to London to try “love in a cottage,” till our hard-hearted fathers should relent.

Would that “love in a cottage” could have been brought to endure one half so long as their obstinacy, we should have been enjoying “love in a cottage” to this hour. Our first step after reaching the metropolis, was to try the effect of writing to our respective “forbears,” as the Scotch have it. The Marquis treated his daughter’s

application to him with cruelty, but yet with dignity, as will be seen from his letter, which ran as follows:—

“ *Sardem Castle, August 14.*

“ The Marquis O'Mortgage presents his compliments to Mr. Miles and Lady Isabella Musgrave, and, in answer to their joint letter of the twelfth instant, has only to assure them that they possess his best wishes for their happiness of all kinds and denominations. At the same time the Marquis hopes he may be permitted to say for himself, that he must always consider disobedience and deceit, qualities sufficiently powerful at a distance, without taking them to one's bosom in a son and daughter.”

On the receipt of this letter, I confess I was very much enraged, and not the less so, by the way, because I could not help admitting that the terms disobedience and deceit were not wholly misapplied.”

After many efforts to swallow my wrath, I snatched up a pen and wrote this rejoinder.

“26, *St. James's Street, August, 16.*

“MY LORD,

“I take leave to acknowledge your note of the 14th.

“Your lordship has two courses open to you—either to treat me as a son or as a stranger. If it is your choice to treat me as a son, I certainly must grant to you the privilege of a father, to write me impertinent letters. If it be your wish to treat me as a stranger, you must grant me the privilege of a gentleman, and name your friend.

“I am, my Lord,

“Much your's

“MILES MUSGRAVE.”

By return of post I received the following epistle, so characteristic of the writer, that I fancied I could see him smiling over the pen, as, with his usual nonchalance, he threw the sheets of note paper on the ground, one after another, till it was finished :—

“ *Sardem Castle,—August, 18.*

“ MY DEAR MR. MUSGRAVE,

“ Having indulged me with the indescribable surprise of entering my family in a manner, equally unsolicited and undeserved; having, in fact, done me the honour to marry my favourite daughter, and to surround my humble connections with all the brilliancy of your vast fortune and distinguished position, I am sure I must have been exceedingly remiss, if anything in my last letter seemed to imply that I ever could forget that you have made yourself my son, and as such must be regarded. I will also, my dear Mr. Musgrave, admit with you, that the privilege of writing impertinent letters to a son, is one far too great and important for its exercise to be even for one instant called into question; and to prove to you that I take your hint, and with a son's annoyances, am ready also to grant you a son's consideration, I will at once, without any further prelude, enter upon my future intentions towards yourself and Lady Isabella, on that subject which—pardon me if I am wrong—was, I pre-

sume, the main object of your writing to me ; I mean the subject of property. And here I may premise, that, however I may have incurred your displeasure by my last letter, you must at once admit that, at any rate, a father has the right, where no *settlement exists, of determining whether he shall give his property to his children during life, or after death ; or in what proportions and amounts, with what limitations and what uses.* Whether as a lawyer, a man of the world, or a country gentleman, I am sure I shall be honoured with your approbation thus far ; and though in the exercise of my discretion I may seem to be somewhat limited in the amount, permit me once again, apart from every other feeling, to wish you every happiness that such a sum as I shall give can offer."

Up to this point I had read the Marquis's letter to my wife—when I saw from the beginning that there was no personal hostility at hand—Isabella at the time was sitting on a footstool between my knees, and on hearing the few last sentences, she with her warm affectionate heart burst forth—

“Ah, my dear father! I knew he could not cherish anger long against me. He forgives us, dear Miles. It will be only a short banishment, and we shall go to him at Christmas as great pets as ever. O, how happy that will make me!”

As for me, while Isabella threw her arms around me, and thus interrupted her father's bland sentences with these fond ejaculations, I was but too anxious to believe she was right, but yet hardly knew what to make of it; however, after a short interval I read on:—

“Acting I say on this discretion, and these principles, I think it right in the case of my dear daughter, the Lady Isabella, to defer till my death her share of my property; and for the present, my dear Mr. Musgrave, it will suffice for me to assure you, on the honour of a peer, that I have this day added a codicil to my will, securing the sum to be paid to Lady Isabella Musgrave at my death; though I have—I hope you will not think unkindly—encumbered it with the proviso, that the same is to be free from the debts, liabilities, or controul

of her now or any future husband. Still, on one point I am willing to remodel my bequest, and be guided by Lady Isabella; or, in other words, by yourself, namely, as to *whether any proportion shall be paid to her in person, immediately on my decease, or whether the whole shall be invested, and the interest paid over to her for her life, with remainder to her children, in such proportions as she may by will appoint; and also whether she or you have any particular choice as to the names of any trustees, that I may at once name them in your behalf.* And now, as nothing further on this point occurs to me, beyond naming the amount so left, I will in conclusion, with your kind permission, do so—it is—one shilling.

“ I remain,

“ My dear Mr. Miles Musgrave,

“ Your’s very faithfully,

“ O’MORTGAGE.”

“ MILES MUSGRAVE, Esq.”

My wife was bitterly cut up with this letter; but, after the first annoyance at being

so taken in, I confess I could not help being vastly amused by it myself, and, determined that the Marquis should still get a Roland for his Oliver, I sat down and wrote him the following short note :—

“ 23, *St. James’ Street, August 20.*

“ MY DEAR MARQUIS,

“ Permit me to thank you exceedingly for your recognizing me under your own hand as your son ; and at the same time allow me to acknowledge the very unusual offer you have made of providing for myself and wife, your daughter Lady Isabella, by a testamentary disposition. As the sum you have left us, however, does not imperatively require the creation of a separate trust, or that it should be paid by the interest from time to time, instead of the whole principal at once, we shall leave that, and with it the question of trustees, entirely to your superior discretion. As to the amount of the bequest itself, I am certain you will forgive me for assuring you, that, in giving to us the entire sum of one shilling, we both know too truly, it is all your generosity could

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lead you to offer, and still more than, I fear, your debts will enable your assets to pay.

“ I am ever, my dear Marquis,

“ Your sincere son-in-law,

“ MILES MUSGRAVE.”

Quite content that the Marquis had not much room to laugh at the issue of our correspondence, for though he affected to jest at them, he was exceedingly sore about his debts, *I now resolved to address myself and all my abilities, humble as they might be,* to secure the happiness of that exquisite being who, for my sake, had made so vast a sacrifice as I now began to perceive awaited Isabella.

We have all heard before to-day of the aforesaid “love in a cottage,” and though, in happier hours, no two people would have laughed more heartily than Isabella and myself at such an image, still, however, when it came to our own turn, we were quite persuaded that we should thrive upon it exceedingly, and that, indeed, we could thereupon be quite as happy as any sucking doves in the universe. My correspondence

with the Marquis had taken place while we were in lodgings in St. James' Street; but, now that the struggle of grim old poverty was unavoidable, I, in order to make it as light as might be, proceeded at once to look out for some agreeable villa in an eligible suburb.

On the Harrow-road I found a very delightful summer-box. It was not in the very best of repair, it is true, but that reduced the rent more nearly to the compass of my own income. I had always been somewhat given to the small comforts of life, and so at once set about removing my furniture that had been so redundant in chambers—hired two servants, with whom I had the best of characters—gave minute instructions for the instant fitting up a few rooms for immediate occupation, and on a given day resigned the comfortable apartments we had held in town, and away we drove to take possession of the first roof-tree we had ever owned in the way of householders, namely, the suburban delights of Carlton-cottage.

After considerable ringing and so forth

by the hackney-coachman, while I, naturally anxious that Isabella, accustomed to every luxury, should find things as little uncomfortable as possible, could not possibly imagine what was the cause of delay at my own gate—footsteps were presently heard coming down the walled garden, and at last, the portal being opened, there was the man-servant as drunk as any gentleman need see a retainer. Nor was this all. The man's drunkenness was of that offensive sort that grows insolent under the influence of stimulus; and never having seen much of me, he now very pleasantly took it into his head that I was not his master, but a marauder come to rob the premises, and that he could not possibly give me admission.

Well, thought I, as I saw sundry suspicious glances in the eye of the hackney-coachman, for I had alighted, in order to pull at the bell myself, when I found there was some demur as to admittance, it only requires that this drunken tale should be believed by jarvey, and myself and wife be given in charge to the first constable, to make our annoyance complete. Fortu-

nately, however, we were spared this consummation, for whatever the worthy man thought, he expressed no doubt of the kind; and, after paying double the fare, to ease his mind upon the subject, he handed the boxes into the garden, amid the drunken efforts of the servant to oppose an entry, and away he drove. I then took the worthy worshipper of Bacchus by the neck, bundled him into the road to find his bed in the softest part—bolted the door upon him, to prevent the possibility of his return—walked towards the house with Lady Isabella leaning on my arm—entered the open door of Carlton-cottage, and in this comfortable way we commenced our first attempt at housekeeping.

“At any rate,” thought I, “I ordered the cook to be here at four o’clock; it’s now past seven; she must be at home. I hope she has not, like the other fellow, been carousing too deeply.” And thus, in fear and trembling, I turned into the first sitting-room—in which room the upholsterer had received orders to place the furniture in proper style—and there, to my

horror, I perceived all my chairs and tables wrapped up in the same sweet hay-bands in which they had left my chambers, and not a thing fit to use.

From the sitting-room I wandered into the library, hoping that to some accident was attributable the disappointment I had just met, and that here, at least, there would be some attempt at comfort and order. Alas! the library possessed not even a carpet, and the very floors, as left by the last tenant, were in the same unswept state as had witnessed his departure.

Be it ever recorded to my enduring honour, I neither gnashed my teeth nor tore my hair; but, when I turned round and looked at the exquisite form behind me, that, for such a home and such a reception as this, had braved a father's taunting anger, and refused all the delicacies that rank and fortune could lay at her feet, I felt the first movings of that dark despair that, for years, seemed fated to dog my every step in life. From one room we wandered to another—all were alike—cold, bleak, and desolate—nothing at hand—nothing to be had—no-

thing ready, but the picture of desolation.

I have attempted to describe a dirty unfurnished house, considerably out of repair, and not the least effort made to receive the new tenant, or to make it a jot more hospitable than it had been at the moment the last quitted it. Isabella was a frank, joyous, gay, laughing being, and I thought I could remember the time when such a *contre temps* as this would have excited her utmost mirth and laughter, afforded food for her jests, and roused her wit with a thousand playful vagaries. But, alas, we none of us know how, in different moods of the mind, we may be differently affected by the same trifles. With me, however miserable I may be when any serious misfortunes befall me, I always laugh at them, and make a jest of the thing, and I do it on principle; for we are such creatures of habit, and are, in short, made of such malleable materials, that the heart can hardly be persuaded seriously to grieve, at that which furnishes the sound of laughter to its lips.

What, however I, a stern and determined

devil in a quiet way might do, and what a young girl unversed in the sorrows of the world, even in theory, might be able to accomplish, are two widely different things.

No after life can ever banish from my remembrance the agony I endured, when, instead of returning any sort of answer to my mirth, ill timed, though well meant as it was, I beheld that beloved and brilliant creature so especially formed, and delighting in every species of enjoyment, sink silently back on one of the bales of unpacked furniture, and burst into a flood of tears. That weakness which not all a father's wrath—not all the disappointment of love—not all our years of waiting, nor any other cause with which, as far as I was acquainted, had ever extracted from her, this scene of desolation, to which I had so unwittingly brought her, at once gave rise.

CHAPTER VI.

“Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.”

THE ANCIENT MARINER.

ANNOYANCES are of a twin or rather gregarious nature, and man never seems able to encounter one without instantly having a whole flock upon him. When I looked round me, and saw how I was placed, my first proposition was to return to the lodgings we had just left; but, as we had given notice, in order to quit them, I now remembered that they had been taken by another party, who, in all probability, was at this time in possession, and that, moreover, the few valuables we did possess in life, had been sent in a heavy packing-case

to the cottage, and that if we left it unprotected for an hotel, or, to seek new lodgings, we should leave everything open to plunder during the night.

All these points, of course, flashed upon us in our dilemma.

I then proposed that I should go and get a lodging somewhere in the neighbourhood, and, as soon as the servant came to take care of the house, I could conduct Isabella to our fresh quarters ; but thoroughly overcome by low spirits, and grief and horror, at the desolation that reigned around her, she implored me not to leave her by herself, in what she termed “ this dismal den,” with night already at hand. I looked out to see if it would be feasible that she should accompany me, but the clouds, which had been lowering the whole of the afternoon, were now sending down slow steady determined rain, increasing with every moment, and though Carlton-cottage was very pretty, and had struck my fancy from its romantic and secluded position, yet I knew it stood direfully alone, not a house near it for a vast distance, and as for a coach stand, none

was to be found for miles. I confess, too, that my ear was susceptible of all the nicety of a parent's feelings with regard to this retreat, which I had chosen after a long hunt for its gentlemanly and *recherché* appearance in a small way, and the good taste displayed in its accompaniments. To hear this, therefore, called a dismal *den*, after it had cost me days and days of house-hunting, when I knew that in rent I had gone far beyond what in my circumstances was quite prudent; and when, whatever its faults, I had been able to find nothing to compare with it within a walking distance of my own chambers, I say, this verdict on my choice was exceedingly annoying.

After placing before Lady Isabella the various matters on which I have commented, I took her opinion as to what she would like to be done, and for the first time perceived with grief, something like temper in the answers of the spoilt and petted youngest daughter, instead of decision amid such a host of difficulties.

I was blamed for having so badly managed matters, as not to see before I brought her

to this dismal *den*,—a word that went to my very marrow—for not having seen, before I took such a step, that accommodation was ready for her reception. In vain I reminded the tearful beauty, that I had been for the last three days hard at work at chambers, on some sudden business, which had been sent me with the most urgent prayers for attention, from one of my very best clients, and to whom, under existing circumstances, though the long vacation had not yet expired, it would have been the height of ingratitude to have shown any discourtesy. I had imagined I could place confidence in others, and, like the rest of mankind, discovered my mistake too late.

Finally, I expressed an opinion that, bad as the alternative was, we had better wait till the new servant came—let her take charge of the house—get a post-chaise from the nearest inn, and drive back to an hotel.

Luckily, this was Saturday night; I had, therefore, a free day before me for the morrow, and could then seek out some other lodging.

To this proposition, as the last alternative of our despair, the Lady Isabella acceded, mourning grievously over the defection of a certain lady's maid, to whom—as ladies will, in spite of all you can say to them—she had communicated divers confidences.

Thus, to “her maid,” Lady Isabella had told the issue of my correspondence with her father; on which the lady's maid aforesaid, who was engaged to his Lordship's man, that is, his confidential valet out of livery, concluded it would be impolitic to let a cloud come between her and the sun, and so, leaving a note for her mistress, the “maid” had, two nights since, taken herself off to the Castle by a northern mail, begging Lady Isabella to excuse her defection “under existing circumstances.” This base desertion had been effected while we had been taking a drive in the Park, and this completed the sense of loneliness and misery in my wife, who had for years been accustomed to the ministrations of this “faithful creature.”

Our decision being to wait the coming of the new servant, I set about preparing a fire for Isabella, as the most inspiring

assistance I could render her. The coals, wood, and tinder-box were all readily found, but when I looked for anything to convey the fuel, not a coal-scuttle could I find. I then bethought me of the fire-irons, but they were packed away with equal regard to inextricability ; I could trace nothing of them, and concluded none had been sent. I wandered into the garden in search of the spade, which, with various other horticultural implements, I had ordered from the *nearest ironmonger, but it would seem that my having paid for them had terminated all hopes of their being sent home ; not a spade was to be had.*

The coal-cellar was, of course, some distance from the sitting-rooms, and in order to convey that mineral, of which both our fathers owned several extensive mines, drawing immense revenues from them, their descendants had no alternative but to draw on their gloves, pile a quantity upon a large sheet of stout brown paper that we found upon the floor, and draw this novel kind of train carefully along towards the fire-place for which it was intended.

Now, as several steps occurred between the coal-cellar and the library, we were obliged to take the four corners of our *papier* coal-scuttle, and lift it over the stairs, and when I beheld the lovely daughter of a Marquis thus engaged, I forgot that a descendant of a knight banneret at Agincourt was assisting her, and only saw the much-sought beauty, around whom, at ball and drawing-room, I had so often seen some of the highest personages of the land crowding for her smiles, and who, as I before said, had rejected all that a girl could desire in the way of marriage for such a lot; I tried to lighten our sorrows as much as possible, by reminding my fellow-sufferer of Robinson Crusoe, but the desert island seemed to make all the difference; and, though I said something about love in a wilderness, and laughed at the whole affair as an adventure quite refreshing from its novelty, the tears still fell on.

Having contrived to light a fire, I began to consider, as the time passed on, whether it was not possible that the worthy woman who had already so greatly disappointed me,

might not still further pursue the same conduct ; whether, in short, it was not very possible that, having delayed coming so long a time, she might not put a final crown to her defections by not coming at all.

The night by this period was getting late, and I reflected, that if the worthy creature should not appear soon, no alternative would be left us, but to sleep amid all the beauties of my classic *rus in urbe* ; and my blood absolutely ran cold, as I thought of the beautiful Lady Isabella having to pass the night on the bare boards. Saying nothing of this frightful image, I proposed a little excursion into the romantic neighbourhood of the bed-rooms, but was told, not quite in the tone I could have wished, that the sitting rooms were sufficiently horrible, without any tempting of Providence by exploring the chambers.

If there had been any neglect or want of due caution on my part, it was sufficiently repaid by this appearance of temper on the part of my wife, and being myself a very fiery peppercorn, I, who knew that my sacrifices in life for this marriage had only been

inferior to Isabella's, felt direfully grieved at her conduct. Not that I could not have taken, without repining, ten times the amount of actual annoyance thus occasioned, but I grieved over the evidence it gave, of a disposition wholly unsuited to contend with the struggles and privations of comparative poverty, a condition of which I had always entertained an intuitive horror; and touching the avoidance of which I had always been most decided, in those mental arrangements to which I have already alluded.

Not trusting myself with any reply to this last ungracious speech, I took a light and found my way alone up stairs, to what had once been a beautiful chamber, with dressing rooms, bath, closet, small conservatory, and a flight of stairs leading down to the garden; which, had my directions been faithfully followed, would now have been fitted quite ready for our reception.

I entered with some difficulty, from the lumber of an unpacked bedstead placed behind the entrance, and on looking round

the walls, just as I expected, not a brush had been put upon them, nor a piece of paper, nor even a ceiling recoloured, to efface the damp stains that various leakages through the roof had, from time to time, occasioned. However, I was too completely sold to suffer in the matter, and it being a rule of my life never to regret anything, and never to waste in repining, that time, which with a little activity may suffice to repair those sorrows at which the generality of mankind only grieve, I returned to the library, contrived to extract from one of the cases a bundle of French novels; and, having laid these by the side of Lady Isabella, I proceeded, with a thousand blessings on the head of Mr. Varnish the upholsterer, to kindle a fire in the bed-room, and to exercise my curiosity by looking at the unpacked bedstead, and speculating upon the utility of divers portions, and wondering how such things were put together.

Unfortunately I had no knowledge of mechanics, or if I had, had neglected to cultivate them in any degree; but not daunted by this, I made several efforts to,

what is called, "put up a bed," but finding myself utterly bewildered, I renounced the hopeless attempt, and in despair rolled out a mattress actually upon the bare floor, placed a feather bed on it, broke open a linen case with a brick that I found lying in the kitchen, for I could detect no traces of the keys, and having made an enormous blaze, at the risk of setting fire to the chimney, round this I hung the linen I had extracted from the broken chest; and then I set about discovering whether there was the slightest chance of procuring any refreshment.

I soon found that, unless I killed and roasted my wife's lap dog, which, as a vital necessary had, of course, been brought with us, we had no chance of any thing edible; liquids, however, were speedily discovered in the kitchen—I found—no doubt the cause of all the misery I was enduring—a wine case, which had been broken open, and a quantity of the Champagne stolen.

Here I detected the only sign of civilization I had yet marked in my dominion, an old file, doubtless used by the worthy I

had turned out of doors a few hours since, lay on the ground. I seized it gladly, and knowing the consolation that lies in a glass, when the soul is low, I hailed the thought as a lucky one, and hastened to carry the only tempting matter I could discover, to my sorrowing partner in our new house.

My worthy predecessor in the toping line appeared to have taken his wine from the bottle, for not a glass could I discover. *At length, after a long hunt, I chanced upon one of those large milk basins, with a lip to it, and armed with this rude instrument for giving consolation, I retraced my steps to the library. Here, alas! I found the fire all but gone out; and the Lady Isabella, having cried herself to sleep, was sitting before it, in my easy chair, the only easy thing in the house, slumbering most soundly. 'As I raised the light, it became reflected by a large single drop, yet resting on those long silken eye-lashes that had cost me so dear; and the rays of the candle being decomposed, were shot back in prismatic colours, with the brilliancy of the diamond; and this, added to her exceeding*

beauty, made her look in that dim, dark, miserable solitude, more like a sleeping angel of light than aught beside.

Gently kissing away the tear, so as not to wake her, I replenished the fire till it once more sent forth a gentle blaze and heat—then seating myself most mournfully upon the bare floor, before her I poured half my bottle of Champagne into my milk basin, and, more with the air of the man who *drinks rhubarb than wine, swallowed down the exhilarating beverage.* As I looked around on the chilling spectacle offered on all sides of me, I muttered :—

“So this is the first step towards my insane ambition—and,” I could not help adding also, in thought, though the words did not find prophetic utterance, “the demolition of my own happiness!”

CHAPTER VII.

“ And underneath thy cooling shade
The love-spent youth, and love-sick maid,
Come to weep out the night.”

ROBERT HERRICK.

Not to dwell at unnecessary length over a sad story, I may here add that it was nearly two o'clock before the Lady Isabella awoke, and then, on finding there she was, a fresh fit of tears and lamentation succeeded. Of course, I need not add that no servant came near the place; the truth being, as I afterwards found out, that the poor creature had come with her luggage the day before, had rung at the gate bell for two hours, and gaining no answer, had concluded that I was a most improper person, playing her a trick of some sort; and away she went, to return no more. The cause of

her non-admittance being, in reality, that the man-servant was so drunk, and, I suppose also so fast asleep, that he had heard no one.

This also was the account that I had from my upholsterer, in Bond-street, whose man not being able to make any one hear, pretended to conclude that I had not taken the house, and his master, with marvellous coolness, neglected to apply to me for proper information on the point. But this is anticipating.

With some difficulty I persuaded my wife to swallow the wine, I also enticed her up stairs to look at the splendid arrangements I had made in the couch department. But, as to sleeping on the floor, it was a thing she would not hear of. I therefore brought her my easy chair, with considerable difficulty, up stairs from the library, and placing that for her before the fire, I rolled myself up in the blankets, having previously locked the door, and having seen that the fire was well trimmed, and every comfort in my power offered to my unhappy wife, I fell asleep.

In about half an hour I was roused from my slumber by the Lady Isabella, shaking my shoulder, and with a face of terror and alarm, she uttered her conviction that thieves were breaking into the house, through the window of the next room; alleging as a reason for this assertion, the perpetual recurrence, from time to time, of a most extraordinary noise in that direction.

This was pleasant intelligence for a sleepy man; but, calming my wife's terrors, I hastened to the point of attack, and there found the alarm to be occasioned by the dripping of the rain, which, having come through the roof, plashed sullenly upon the naked floor.

Here my old trick of laughing at my annoyances took possession of me, and on going back and telling my fair spouse what it really was that had alarmed her, I was reproached for my laughter with want of a due feeling for the misery she was enduring.

My only answer to this was, to go below, get up a fresh bottle of Champagne, and, having no Eau de Cologne, I per-

suaded the sorrowing beauty to take the pleasure of a glass of wine with me out of the milk bowl—a proposition so Irish that she could not fail giving a smile to it. And then, confessing herself very much frightened at the perpetual drip—drip—of the rain in the next room, she wisely reconciled her mind to the indignity of her lonely position; and nestling her head on my shoulder, I enwrapt her carefully in the coverlet, and she once more sobbed herself to sleep by my side, leaving me to reflect at my leisure on the delights of marrying for love a high born lady, against the consent of family and parents.

But the peculiar blessings of this last part of my story had yet to arrive. The annoyances through which we had just past, severe as they were, might have happened to us, in a great measure, even though we had been joined by the Archbishop of York, and our union celebrated with all the family honours. The true sting still remained to come. On reaching the nearest posting-house we obtained some breakfast, and a conveyance on to London. I hastened back

to the lodgings we had quitted the night before, in the hope of getting some accommodation; that, however, I did not find, but this I did, namely, a letter from my father's solicitor, in answer to one of mine, reminding him that a fortnight had nearly elapsed since the last quarter-day, when he generally sent me a check for my father's allowance of three hundred a-year, and that nothing particularly brilliant had occurred to render that sum unacceptable. To this the worthy being of red tape replied, "that he was extremely grieved, excessively sorry, and so forth, but the day after my marriage he had received orders from Sir John to discontinue my allowance from that day, after which he begged to remain, &c. &c.

This was peculiarly gratifying. I had now, therefore, the pleasure of maintaining myself and a lady of title for my wife, on the charming modicum of five hundred and fifty pounds a-year, nearly two-thirds of which were so wholly contingent, that I might awake some fine morning, and find them scattered to the winds, when I should have to carry on the war upon two hundred a-year.

The rent of the detestable den, where I had just had the pleasure of sleeping on the floor, amounting to one hundred and twenty pounds yearly of the money, and my chambers, in Lincoln's Inn, amounting to seventy-five more, thus leaving me with the charming allowance of five pounds per annum for horses, gigs, and harness, tailors, mantuamakers, household expenses, and other luxuries. A pecuniary amount of revenue, almost equal in its way to my noble father-in-law's proposed investment of one shilling in the hands of trustees, with the payment of the interest in equal instalments, and remainder to the children of the marriage, if any. It was charming, and I began whistling over the letter with great assiduity.

"What horrid news," asked the Lady Isabella, "does that letter contain, for I know there is something dreadful in it, or you would not begin to whistle. I tried to withhold the dispiriting intelligence, but it was in vain, and then succeeded fresh tears, fresh bewailings.

In this way matters proceeded from bad to worse; that business on which I had been

so much congratulated—that splendid hit, which I had heard on all sides, I had been so fortunate as to make, suddenly appeared to fail wondrously in those golden results that had hitherto flowed from it, and when I came to make some enquiries on the subject, I learnt that Sir John had actually busied himself to every possible extent, to use for my destruction, that family influence that had before been devoted to my advancement.

“Well,” thought I, smiling, “if this is to be the case, I wonder what becomes of the ambitious course now with him.”

Under these circumstances I began to see whether there was such a thing in the world as a friend on whom I might place any reliance for assistance.

I then remembered that my bachelor uncle, after whom I had been named, was expected back from Italy shortly, and that I might possibly secure an ally in him. I therefore sat down and gave him a lively picture of the delights of marrying a noble lady, and allying with the peerage, after which I set off to the defaulting upholsterer,

to rate him soundly for not executing my orders, with regard to Carlton-cottage.

From Mr. Varnish I received the story to which I have already alluded, namely, that the day after my instructions were given, his foreman had driven down to my new house, and, after ringing for an hour, had failed to get any admittance.

“Well, but,” I said, “I gave you my instructions at least a week ago, and if any misgivings had crossed your mind as to my not having taken the cottage, surely you might have applied to me for an explanation.”

At this point, I observed Mr. Varnish was silent, and quite convinced that there was something in the back ground which had not yet reached me, I pressed the witness a little, and at last extracted that he was very sorry, very much grieved, and so forth, but that really he had received so strong a letter from Sir John, stating the facts of the case, that really—I called for the letter—it was not forthcoming—I cross-examined him as to its contents. “Oh, it simply stated that I had married against the consent of all the

parents, and that Sir John could not possibly be answerable for any debts I might contract."

"Debts! who the devil wants him?" said I, "he never has yet, that I am aware of. Pray, Mr. Varnish, may I enquire, as I have already given you several orders, whether you have not always had punctual payment at my hands."

"Oh, yes, certainly, Sir, very punctual, nothing to complain of."

"Then why," said I, "why do you not take me upon your own experience, instead of the reports of others?"

"Oh, really sir," replied Mr Varnish, with a smile of infinite pity, "I am a father myself, Sir, and I really feel for the case of Sir John. Yes, and I may say of the Marquis, too. And if we fathers were to encourage young men to acts of this sort——"

I could listen no further; seizing Mr. Varnish by the throat with the left hand, while I applied most vigorously to his shoulders the cane I held in the other, the whole anguish that I had been enduring for the last fortnight, found at once a practicable

vent, in the most complete thrashing that ever a refractory upholsterer obtained.

“You lying, cheating, impudent, bare-faced scoundrel, not content with making me endure all kinds of privation”—thus ran my homily to the unfortunate varlet, while I still retained him under the operation—
• “not content with this, and meanly crouching to a better customer, because you happened to furnish both a castle and a hall, you must presume, must you, to read me a lecture? Now, take that—and that—and that—and know me for a thorough Christian, returning good for evil; for, while you kept me shivering in the cold last night, I have given you the warmest jacket you have had for many a year.”

This little amusement having taken place in the worthy man's counting-house, I had taken the liberty, before drawing up the curtain of my comedy, to lock the stage-door; therefore the moral trader's assistants could not get in to his relief, and the admirable lesson I was reading to him proceeded to its close, at which time a constable with his truncheon, summoned by

Varnish's foreman, demanded admittance in the King's name.

"You shall have it by all means in the *King's name*," said I, "*or the Queen's* either, if you like;" for at this time the wrongs of poor Caroline were beginning to excite a mighty commotion in the land; and, throwing the moralizing cabinet-maker into a corner, much as one spurns a misbehaving dog, I unlocked the door, and gave admittance to the keeper and proclaimer of peace. They picked up the worthy undertaker, who insisted on immediately going to a magistrate, which I was exceedingly glad to hear.

Yes, no doubt had he waited to communicate with Sir John, that worthy man's greater acumen for annoying an adversary, would have led him to insist on my being prosecuted at the sessions for the assault. And now, by a little management, I had no doubt that a five-pound note would see me clearly out of the little luxury I had enjoyed.

For some diseases physicians recommend the bath—for others bleeding; but, when the mind is sore, I maintain there is nothing

like selecting the object of some ancient grudge, and giving him a monstrous beating. Upon fierce and restless spirits it acts as the most marvellously specific sedative, I know; what with the bodily exertion and the mental gratification, the mind, as St. John Long would have said, “regains its elasticity” at once; and the wholesome dread you have of an action for assault, turns the thoughts into a new channel, with magical rapidity.

When Mr. Varnish arrived before the magistrate, which he speedily did, thanks to my not expressing my delight to go, and more than hinting a doubt that the constable had power to take me, the stuffer of ottomans was still in so potent and powerful a passion, that he could neither speak to make himself understood, nor express himself with that respect for the chair, which in those days all police magistrates held to be about twelve degrees more sacred than any oath in their power to administer. I, on the contrary, was now, thanks to the medicine to which I have just alluded, as calm as a canal; and I took very good care to add to that

advantage the politeness of a courtier, and all the usual respect of an idol worshipper. Not the faintest sound that could be taken for an interruption of the breathless cabinet-maker did I utter. An observer might, indeed, from my apparent apathy, have guessed me to be one of the magistrates' supernumerary clerks, not at that moment engaged in noting the proceedings, until at length, when the complainant had finished his case, Midas turned to me, to know if I could explain what really had taken place. I, who rather thought I could, then stated, "that I had dealt with the complainant for years, and had given him an order to fit up a house, with which order he had promised to comply; that, on the faith of that promise, I had gone down to take possession, found every thing in the utmost disorder—that, in the night, the rain had come through into the sleeping-room—that there was great fear as to what the effect might be on the noble lady to whom Varnish had alluded—and that, when I went to complain to the complainant, he had made no apology for his conduct, but had presumed to make allu-

sions to family arrangements, and to read me a very impertinent lecture—that, in the height of passion, I certainly had laid my cane upon his shoulders—and that, having been hurried into a violation of the law, I was, of course, prepared, with the utmost possible submission, to pay the penalty to any extent his superior judgment and discretion might decree.” Now, as it had not crept out in the proceedings that I was in any profession, the magistrate, I could see, set me down as a well-spoken, proper young man; and the mention of my family, to which Varnish was prompted out of spite, tended, on that day, in aristocratic England, to do a great deal of good, as far as the mere taking off a few pounds of my fine. I had taken care to state nothing that was not strictly the fact; so Varnish could not destroy any effect which I had produced, by denying any of my statements. And, after hearing what he had to say further by way of charge, the magistrate said to Varnish—

“A pretty fellow you are to conduct yourself in such a way. If Mr. Musgrave should be vindictive I would not say that he has

not a good cause of action against you, and as far as this case goes, though he has himself said it was illegal to take the law into his own hands, yet I cannot help saying that he has had great provocation, and so I think the justice of the case will be answered by dismissing it with a slight fine. Mr. Musgrave, I shall bind you over to keep the peace, in your own recognizances, for fifty pounds, with a further fine of five shillings for this assault, and on payment of that fine you are to be discharged.

“ Mr. Musgrave bowed his head very meekly, and retired with the utmost *eclat* into the adjoining room, and, as he went out by the side of the complainant, he said—

“ Now, really Varnish, on my honour, to shew you that I bear you no ill-will, I do assure you that, but for that last matter of the fifty pound recognizance, I should have been most happy to have had another essay at your improvement, for a further and second sum of five shillings as before.

“ It’s a scandalous, infamous shame, Sir,” said Varnish, in a furious rage. “ I say, in this country there is no justice for an honest

man, if he does not happen to have either a title to his own name, or a father, or a cousin that has. It's all very well for you, Sir, to laugh, but you know it's a most infamous decision. I saw, the moment I said you had married the Marquis's daughter, his worship was resolved to let you off.

“It may be all very true, Mr. Varnish,” said I, “and I dare say, for any thing I care, the magistrate may be just as great a sycophant as yourself; it was your own spite induced you to mention the particulars of my present family position. I have no doubt you did it to curry favour at the Hall and Castle, as well as to annoy me; but, like the generality of such contrivances, it recoiled on yourself. In conclusion, I hope you may behave as badly to all your customers as you have done to me, and that, in return, every one of them will give you as sound a thrashing.”

CHAPTER VIII.

“ I mark’d Ambition in his war array.”—COLERIDGE.

BUT, though I had been thus decisive in my language to Varnish, and felt all the relief of the castigation I had given him, this was not an event wholly without its drawback. The report got into the papers, as a matter of course, and thus the whole world became advertised that I had run off with the Marquis’s daughter against his consent, and also very much against the will of my own father. All friends, therefore, who, like the worthy Varnish, curried favour with Sir John and the Marquis, and they were many, showed a cold shoulder to Lady Isabella and to me. As for myself, I was the great-

est wretch that ever existed ; I had behaved with the vilest ingratitude and deceit, it was said, to my noble friend, and my own family, and my heart taxed me with the existence of some truth in this, but I had moreover blasted a fond father's expectations, and was, no doubt, a most ungrateful and unnatural son for the same.

This was a high joke, but I had to endure it, and also to solve a question that touched me far more home, namely, how to get my new villa done up, for it was quite clear, that by my own funds I could not dare to encounter such a cash outlay, and after the caning I had given to Varnish, and the public notice he had taken of it, I, in my ignorance of the world, thought I might have some difficulty in getting any one else in the trade to come to my rescue, instead of knowing that half the delight of people in business, in getting an order, is to take it unexpectedly out of the enjoyment of another. This matter I got accomplished with much less difficulty than I thought.

But little had I dreamed of the thousand and one expenses, entailed on mortals hav-

ing an establishment of their own, however humble. At every step, my chief object was so to manage matters, that Lady Isabella should feel as little as possible the pressure of that foul fiend, poverty, into whose clutches we had taken such especial pains *to get!* *In order to do this, of course I had to trust largely to the chapter of accidents,* and in hopes that my professional income would increase, instead of diminish, I took that perilous step which no man regrets after he has committed it but once, and that is ever while its effects are felt, namely, of getting into debt.

This is the true stone of *Sisyphus*, which, however you toil up hill, again rolls down upon you; and, although this was pursued to an extent far greater than I, indeed, soon dared to think of, still there were, of course, numerous points on which not all my efforts could prevent my wife from feeling, and regretting the change from her father's castle.

Long before the twelvemonth was out, I found the results of that cruel step, which Sir John had so unaccountably felt himself justified in taking, that, namely, of using his

influence to keep me out of business, and just in proportion to the failure of my means of struggling, the strife of life grew heavier on my hands. My wife's confinement approached, and though I knew that all my sisters had urged Sir John to be allowed, if *not to enjoy a thorough reconciliation, at least to visit their sister-in-law, at a moment* when every woman feels so keenly, even an accidental severance from the solace of her friends—they might as well have asked a favour of a West Indian hurricane, or have gone down on their knees to overcome by treaty the action of the Mælstrom. Sir John laughed at all notions of such a class, and when my wife saw that my family had deserted her, she, in an evil hour, listened to the request of her sister, who invited her to go and spend the next three months at the Manor House, in Hertfordshire, belonging to her husband, Lord Braynless; but a part of the requisition was that I was not to accompany her. This invitation, with the heartless proviso, my wife evidently showed an inclination to accept; this was the severest blow, the most bitterly felt calamity that

had yet fallen upon me, and, for a time, I was so staggered by its severity, as scarcely to know what course to adopt. Continually, during the latter months of our marriage, notwithstanding all my struggles to the contrary, many subjects of slight dissension—the 'moral drops' that, by their frequent falling, eat away the most adamant bonds of affection—many causes of minor dissension, I say, had arisen, and one of the chief of them was this :—

I have already said, that, to lessen from my wife the perception of the strong change our circumstances had undergone, I had ventured greatly into debt—a thing that I abhorred from feeling, and condemned from principle. In order to retrieve myself from this, it was absolutely necessary that I should apply myself with the most intense assiduity to master my very difficult profession. And, when I found that, notwithstanding all my labours, my father's unjustifiable anger had led him to draw from me every client he could influence, I knew that my only hope against ruin was to establish, as rapidly as possible, a public reputation, and on that

solid basis defy all malice. For this purpose, the only course I knew was to produce some solid law treatise. And, after much consideration, I selected a subject—was sufficiently fortunate to obtain a very *handsome offer for the work, when complete, from a law publisher—and so, late and early, worked on, in the hope that I should thus finally clear myself from all my present embarrassments.*

But, in order to do this, some notion may be formed of the severity of the studies necessary; when I mention the fact, that I frequently had to rise at four o'clock one morning, and did not retire to rest again till two on the next. The whole day, from nine till five, I was unavoidably absent at my chambers, and thus the portion of my time devoted to Isabella's society, was necessarily reduced to a mere passing fragment.

This gave her great displeasure. She frequently broke into bitter reproaches, fancied that I had become tired of her society, or placed no value on it; and, although I used every argument my reason suggested to assure her that I was the victim of a dire

necessity, which I regretted myself as much as possible for human being to do, all was in vain; she became discontented and unhappy.

At this, indeed, I could not wonder. But while, at the same time, I felt my health sinking beneath the severity of my labours, my own temper, which was naturally violent, often got the better of my discretion, and then ensued a series of domestic jars, which afflicted me so painfully, that I could scarcely reconcile my mind to the endurance of life on such undesirable terms.

My debts went on increasing, reconciliation with either of our families was impossible, and my own resources were certainly not enlarging; while, to augment tenfold every annoyance, came those of duns.

We often pity the poor; and I have myself frequently, when riding along 'in the sunshine,' been grieved to the soul, by looking at some laborious son of toil, sweating painfully on at his work, and felt inclined to marvel at the Providence that could give to two men, born within a few yards of each other, lots so widely diversified. To one an enormous landed estate, but, to

the other, a daily struggle for the barest sustenance. Now, often as I retired to rest, fagged and jaded to the heart's core, with nothing but the dullest and most painful of horrors gradually thickening around me—often did I envy the condition of any peasant on my father's estate, to whom a simple twelve hours of mere bodily work, secured all the rude comforts they had been accustomed to desire. Often, too, did I sigh, *almost broken-hearted, over the thoughts of that happy life of domestic quietude, which had been the real limit of my own ambition,* and ask myself, where now was the happy hearth, the quiet study, and the tranquil mind, arising from the conscientious discharge of a useful duty? Often did I curse that heartless ambition which, after ruining the estate of its owner, must not only withhold from his son the real blessings in his power to impart, but plunge him in the same insane vortex of struggling vanities, that had already proved so fatal to himself.

Frequently my eyes used to turn involuntarily to the bottle of opium, which, dedicated to various household purposes, stood

on the mantel-piece of my dressing-room, and, again and again, I used to ask myself, whether there was not a point in human suffering, at which a merciful God and Father would not pity his distracted creature, for resigning the burden of existence? Then would recur to me the form of my wife, the image of that child that might shortly present its claims on my protection and labours, and I turned shuddering away. In retiring from my study to rest, tears and reproaches often formed the sole reward for all I had undergone, and that which is worse to him who sighs for domestic happiness, a discontented and unhappy aspect on that face, where you have always been accustomed to look for, and to prize, the sunny smiles of an affectionate welcome.

In this position matters rested, when the invitation of Lady Braynless arrived. As I had never very warmly appreciated the vain and heartless character of this woman, I gave most decided opposition to my wife's renewing the intimacy at all; though under the existing circumstances of the case I, of

course, felt inclined to relax, as much as possible, this prohibition. But still, as it was possible that at the period in question, I should be able to leave town occasionally for a few days, and as the distance to Hertfordshire was very trifling, I was quite resolved, that I would not permit my wife to go under the roof of a person, whose principles were anything but satisfactory to my mind, deprived of that protection which it was my privilege to afford.

This determination on my part, produced a violent quarrel, and, finally, Lady Isabella declared her intention of going, with or without my consent. In a moment of anger, I answered that she would, of course, use her own discretion in taking such a step, but that if she left the protection of my house, without my consent, she could never again return to it. Further words followed, and the matter at last ended in a determination on both sides to resort to a formal separation. For this the necessary instructions were given, and the day arrived when the deed was to be signed.

As I still continued firm to my point,

reason at last came to Isabella's assistance, and writing a note to say that she gave up her visit to her sister's, and would remain with me, the deed of separation was thrown on the fire.

A few days after this took place, a formal invitation from the Braynless *coterie* arrived for both of us, which, in an evil hour, I accepted, and we set off soon afterwards for Hertfordshire.

Much about this time, as if it were ever fated in this world that good and evil should come together, the work, which had cost me so much pain of mind and sacrifice of domestic happiness, came out. It was very fortunate in the reception given to it by the public; it ran off in a few days, and I was required to prepare a second edition. While very busy with this, and absent temporarily in London, Lady Isabella became the mother of twins, which only survived some few days; and, before I could hurry down to see my children, I was childless.

With all the folly and short-sightedness of man, steeped to the lips in difficulties as I was, I felt the death of these little things to

to be a severe misfortune ; not only because that strange feeling which is planted in the human breast, the love of our offspring, seemed of late, infinitely to my surprise, to have sprung up in my own heart, without any apparent cause ; but I thought that the cares of a mother, and those delights that accompany them, would be the very best atonement to Isabella, for the absence of her husband, and her own-banishment from the gay circle in which she had been reared. I lived, however, afterwards to think, that the death of these poor infants was about the happiest dispensation that could have happened to me.

Lady Isabella's recovery was tedious, but at length she was pronounced sufficiently restored to return to London, and, not without considerable satisfaction, I saw her bid adieu to the Braynless clique. Her brother-in-law, his Lordship, was one of those well-enough-in-their-way sort of people, of whom it is impossible to say much in any light, but the sister had grown up into a dangerous plotting *intriguante*. She had never forgiven me for having flirted with her my-

self, while my real attachment was with her sister—no very right thing it is true—and she also cherished a detestation of the man, who, by enticing her sister into a love match, had lessened one of the best chances of high family connexion which she desired, for the purpose of strengthening the position of her own children hereafter. Little foreseeing that if she had been true^e to me, Providence was hereafter to guide me, Heaven knows, all undesirous of the elevation as I was, into a position where, more than twenty such men as Lord Braynless, I should have had the opportunity of assisting her family. But this is an error often made in life, by people desirous of being extremely prudent, but who, in their career, are unscrupulous of running counter to those great natural guides, which Nature has placed for^o our safe conduct in the ties of affection, and the impulses of generosity. Nothing more was required of her, than that she should have followed the plain path, by simply endeavouring to reconcile her sister to the position into which she had been thrown, and I could have repaid

her for the kindness a thousand-fold. Instead of this, the truce patched up with me was, I saw, hollow in the extreme, and she spared no effort to plant dissension between my wife and myself.

CHAPTER IX.

“O, Peace, that on a lillied bank dost love
To rest thine head beneath an olive tree,
I would that from the pinions of the dove,
One quill withouten pain yplucked might be.”

COLERIDGE.

ON our return to London I found my book selling well, and my practice at length making a slow, but steady rise.—Not from friends and connexions, and their clients—that most dangerous of all grounds on which to rely—but from men who brought their business to me, simply because they knew I had fagged hard upon the subject, and they thought that I should do them as much, or more justice than any other man.

Let those who would rise only put themselves in this position, and they may smile at all patronage, or connexion, on the one

hand, or spite on the other; for they have then secured mankind by the only bond capable of finally retaining our fickle nature -- self interest.

Still, the small amount which my book produced, was rapidly swallowed up by the more pressing of my creditors, and with it also the more immediate, though increased proceeds of my practice; and, much as I strove to render my home productive of every comfort to its fair mistress, I could not help wondering that she should feel it to be dull and poverty-stricken, contrasted with the bustling and wealthy splendour to which she had ever been accustomed, and which her less handsome sister seemed to have had a malicious delight in parading, with every addition and ostentation, before her eyes at Braynless Park. But even insufficient as might be our establishment, Lady Isabella little dreamed, how slight was the step that intervened, between her and the deprivation of every article of comfort and utility around her. One of those creditors to whom I had been most considerate, and to whom, for his satisfaction, I had

given a *cognovit*, pretended to take umbrage at what he was pleased to term the extravagance of my style of living—meaning, namely, my keeping horses for my wife, who had always been in the habit of holding these as part of the indispensable necessities of life; and whose health, in truth, required the exercise—demanded immediate payment of his debt for five hundred pounds, and failing that within ten days, declared his determination to sweep off everything by an execution. In the utmost distress I began to ponder on the different resources by which this paltry sum—to me an enormous demand—could be so quickly raised. Several quarters presented themselves, each in turn were tried, and each in turn failed. As a last resource, I applied to my elder brother, who answered, and in serious earnestness too, that he knew a very conscientious Jew, who was in the habit of advancing money to clients at seventy per cent. but who, he thought, as a favour to him, would let me have the cash at about fifty-five, the terms on which he himself had been raising

money on *post obits* for some years past. This was my last application. I determined not to accept such terms, and was sitting after dinner listening to Lady Isabella's complaints, how much she wanted a new piano, and thinking what stroke of misery was next in store for us both, when my clerk arrived from chambers, with a packet of letters. On opening them, with all the listlessness of despair, my blood rushed to my heart as I recognized the writing of my god-father and uncle. Tearing open the seal, I read, dated from Buenos Ayres, the following letter:—

“ MY DEAR BOY,

“ I have received your kind epistle, announcing your marriage. Give my warmest love to your wife, Lady Isabella, and say, I hope soon to hail her as my most valued niece; and tell her, that the fact of those sacrifices she has made for you, endear her intuitively more to my heart than all her birth, rank, or even beauty. I cannot write you a long letter now, because, in the present state of things, it would only

be opened and read by other eyes than ours, which is needless. Never fear that anything shall ever win my affection from you, unless it is what you lawyers term your own act and deed. You say your father has disowned you, and the Marquis has played the same trick by his daughter, and all hopes of income are thus cut off on both sides. You know I detest extravagance, and hate debt. Avoid both, therefore, my dear boy, if you wish to please me; for extravagance leads to debt, and debt to a prison. And you know of old my declaration, ridiculous though it may be, that if my dearest child were to sully our name by bearing it into the walls of a gaol, or inflicting on it any dishonour tantamount to such a blot, nothing should ever induce me to forgive him. I know we are all mortal, and therefore all weak; but dishonour of this excessive stamp I think we may all avoid; and, in order that I may as far as possible help you to come up to my own wishes on this point, and assist to start you on your first rough encounter with that unkind, uncannie thing—the world—permit me to re-

quest your acceptance of a thousand pounds, which I have written to my agents to pay to you on demand. And here, perhaps, as it may set your mind at ease, I may as well tell you, that I have left you the bulk of my property, as my godson and namesake ; but, remember, I give you warning, that, freely as I have bequeathed this large property to you, so I shall just as promptly revoke the bequest, should I ever be convinced that you have become unworthy of the preference I have ever entertained for you. I have long lived considerably within my income ; and even those demands which the claims of life make upon us towards others, have left me a large surplus to put by. As, therefore, I may still live many years to hoard up for you, and play the tyrant over my gold, it will perhaps be wiser at once to make you an allowance, while youth is capable of enabling you to enjoy it, rather than hold it back a useless heap, to reach you at a time when you are growing sated with life's unavoidable cares, and you have already acquired from your honourable profession quite as much, as any

reasonable mortal may desire. On the first of January, therefore, on every year, I shall give my agents instructions to place at your command, a similar sum to that I now send you of a thousand pounds. And, though this will place two thousand within your reach, within a time of something less than three months, you must not permit this fact to render you extravagant, as I do it, not to encourage you in the notion that you can afford to live at this rate, but simply to make more light, that heavy burden of outlay, which all young married folks must encounter at starting. Kiss Lady Isabella twice for me, and whisper to her very gently, that if ever she should require to give a name to a son and heir, she has most affectionately at her service that of your sincere

“ MILES MUSGRAVE.”

On reading this epistle, the excitement I felt was so intense, the emotions of gratitude and thankfulness so strong, that a sensation quite of choking rose in my throat, and the tears, to which my eyes had been strangers for many years, appeared to be

rushing forth beyond my power to restrain them, when suddenly my eye fell on another hand-writing, namèly, that of my youngest sister, which I now, for the first time, perceived, had enclosed the letter I had just finished. My sister's letter ran as follows :—

“ DEAREST MILES,

“ Yesterday, in the library, papa called me in to seal some letters for him, and, looking in his writing-drawer for some sealing-wax, I came across the enclosed letter, which I immediately perceived was in uncle Miles' hand-writing. Knowing that you were always the favourite, I thought it very strange that a letter to you from him, unopened, and bearing upon it a post-mark much later than the day when you left this, should have got into my father's custody; and this led me, though I fear it was very wrong, to put the letter under a book, in order to consider what had better be done with it. And when, on sealing his correspondence, I perceived he never missed the letter I had taken, I thought I might

venture to send it on to the rightful owner. But I do entreat you, my dear Miles, if there is any thing in the letter that can lead my father to find out it has been taken away, after you have read it, seal it up again, send it to me, and I will contrive to get it back into the drawer where I found it. Tell your dear wife, we often cry over the hard fate that has fallen on you, and long, oh! so eagerly to see you both once more. But you know how dreadfully angry papa is; and he has threatened if either of us are found out seeing or writing to you, to disinherit us and send us from home, and this would be my fate if I were detected in scribbling these poor lines. There is a very nice person, a gentleman who has recently settled in our neighbourhood, who comes now and then to sing a duet with me, and he has promised to convey this to you. I am afraid I have been very imprudent in so far making him a confidant in the unhappy differences of the family; but I could not, dear Musgrave, think of the misunderstanding which the delay of this letter might produce between you and dear uncle Miles,

whose heir we always used to think you would be, without trying to avoid such a calamity, by risking every thing to send it to you. Do not, therefore, acknowledge its receipt by writing, but put some advertisement into the Times, similar to those funny ones that we have so often laughed at together, and sign it Orlando Furioso, and I shall know that all is right. Oh, that papa would listen to our entreaties, that we might all meet happily once more! A thousand kisses to darling Isabella! Yours ever,

“GEORGIANA.”

If I was charmed by the affection that dictated this last letter, let it be imagined what were my feelings towards Sir John respecting the other. But even this vehement sentiment became softened down, and presently entirely lost, in the exquisite delight I felt at my dear uncle's generosity. If no mischance occurred to thwart my hopes, there were now lying for me at his agents two thousand pounds. Oh, what an inexhaustible fortune that appeared! It would just clear off all my debts, and leave

me a few hundreds to start the fresh year with; and then, with the continued thousand a-year, and any unfettered income arising from my practice, I could go on admirably, and the path to fame and fortune—for which, for my wife's sake, I now began to thirst as ardently as any striver in the lists—grew bright and palpable before me. Now, also, I should be able to redeem the heavy mortgage which I had long since been obliged to raise on my two hundred a-year, under my mother's settlement, into the enjoyment of which I had come, on attaining my majority. After all my struggles, and sorrows, and sufferings, I should at last, indeed, be a happy man! Then, indeed, my darling Isabella's beautiful face would grow bright and exquisite, as I had ever been accustomed and delighted to behold it; in times of old; her merry laugh would once more ring out its music to my heart, and all be bright again. I was just about to rise, throw my arms around her waist, and tell her with transport the fortune that had befallen us, when, seeing that there was still another letter remaining to

be opened, some unaccountable sentiment of fear flashed momentarily before my eyes—the dark suggestion arose, that these unread lines might dash from my lips the cup of joy, as suddenly as my uncle's had sufficed to raise it. And yet, thought I, be it what it may, it cannot alter the brilliant fact, that my uncle has resolved on leaving me his heir—heir to a rental which must now be double, if not treble, that of my father—a rental that was still in part, and originally altogether, derived from West Indian property, and had come from a collateral branch of the family to my uncle, and, in his careful hands, must now make very little short of thirty thousand a-year; to not one-fourth of which had his expenditure ever reached. But away with such base, sordid thoughts, I muttered to myself, may he live to the last hour as long as I; his noble gift of a thousand a-year is more than all I ever expected from him. Would that he had been my father! Oh, how I could have loved him!

CHAPTER X.

“Fair Fortune, dost thou truly smile,
Or is it but a deeper wile,
To draw me in thy net with guile,
And crush with misery?”—ADAM.

WITH a long sigh I opened the letter that, during the few last minutes, had remained suspended in my hand. I felt my fingers tremble, and my cheek turn pale. I felt an icy shudder creep through my bosom, as my eye glanced over these fatal lines :—

“SIR,

“As the solicitors of the late Miles Musgrave, Esquire, of Beauvale Priory, it is our painful duty to inform you of the decease of our much respected client, who departed this life at C——, on the first of

last month, on his way to England from South America. His latest act was to leave instructions for the forwarding to us his last will and testament, with orders that it should be opened at Beauvale Priory, as soon after its receipt by us as circumstances would permit, and read in the hearing of such of his family as might think proper to be present, after a fortnight's notice to be given by us in writing to all his relatives. As the nephew of our late respected client, we now beg to forward you this letter as the notice required, and to request the honour of your presence at Beauvale on this day three weeks.

“ We have the honour to remain, Sir,

“ Your obedient servants,

“ FELLWORTH & SON.”

Into what sincere grief the perusal of this letter threw me; here was my noble relative, just at the very moment he was calculating on a long enjoyment of his honourable and useful life, cut off at the briefest notice; while I, who lay under such deep obligations to him, had never had an

opportunity of expressing to him, the deep gratitude I owed for all his generosity ; but had for ever lost the delight, and it would, indeed, have been a very great one, of pressing to my heart the noble being, who, in my hour of sorrow and distress, had stepped forward to rescue me from the host of ills, into which my precipitate marriage had hurried both myself and that being I most loved on earth. Then, after these bitter feelings passed away, there came a reflection. To that being I was now able to offer all that wealth, luxury, and enjoyment which love ever delights to pour upon its idol ; for which she—nor could I blame her for it—so naturally sighed. In an ecstasy of delight I sprang from my seat, threw the whole of the letters I had been reading into her lap, as she sat sorrowfully gazing upon the embers of our cottage fire, and exclaiming—

“ It is over ! Dearest, darling Isabella,” seized her in my arms, and ran with her exultingly round the room, less like a sane and grave conveyancer, than a mad and intoxicated school boy. In vain, half terrified,

she demanded from me the meaning of my extravagant joy; in the incoherency of this exquisite moment, not only was my dear uncle's death forgotten for the time, but delight had temporarily deprived me of the power of lucid speech, and when at last she learned that she had suddenly become mistress of a rental of thirty thousand a-year, her happiness seemed equal to mine. Ah, what a delightful evening was that we passed together! How many thousand castles in the air were built, remodelled, pulled down, and built again! How we anticipated the sensation the intelligence would produce, at the Castle and the Hall! How magnanimously we resolved to forgive the Marquis for his cold neglect, and even perhaps lend him some thousands at the same rate as the funds; to transfer a few of those most pressing mortgages, which were drawing out from him five per cent. in England, and still more in other quarters! How coldly we determined, for a time, to receive the iron-hearted Baronet from the Hall; and oh! how amply and speedily we resolved to dower the darling Georgiana, in order to

give to “the nice person, who came occasionally to sing duets” with her, the beautiful little hand of the warm-hearted sister!

In the midst of all these delicious reveries midnight told its chime. My wife, all hopes and happiness, retired, and I, taking up a bundle of papers to my dressing-room, trimmed my small student’s fire, and sat down with a resolute determination, which I was vain enough to admire even in myself, to read one of the last briefs, that I had resolved should ever be perused by a certain junior counsel possessing thirty thousand a-year of private property. But this I did, remembering that however large an estate had come to me, none had in all probability arrived, by the same post, to my client, who, as he had always been very steady in his devotion to myself, and the opinion he appeared to entertain of my industry, should not, I was resolved, be disappointed in the matter, in which he had given me to understand his own professional credit was concerned. My work finished at length, and to the last letter, I retired to rest. *Isabella forgave without a murmur the absentee, and

at six next morning I arose—having been unable to obtain a single hour's sleep—feverish and impatient to obtain the two thousand pounds of my generous uncle's property, which was now my own, and to pay off every one of those debts, the necessity to contract which had weighed me with so dreadful an affliction. Having arrived at the agents', and made due inquiry, I found that they had received the letters from my uncle, instructing them to pay me the two thousand pounds in question, whenever I should call to demand it, but, as I had never called, they had thought it unnecessary to enquire me out, to ask if I wanted the money :—a proceeding they seemed very much surprised at my ever contemplating ; thinking, I suppose, it was quite enough to pay those who asked them, without seeking out parties to absorb payments. On seeking from me what was the amount I required, and hearing that I desired to have the whole of it, some demurrer arose on the fact of my uncle being since dead, and a question how far they were accountable to the trustees, who might be disclosed under

his will, for such an amount being in their hands. Finally, however, they consented to pay over to me the amount at once, on my giving them my guarantee to bear them harmless against any future proceedings, a security with which they were quite satisfied, on my showing that portion of my uncle's letter which declared me his heir. For many months I had rarely passed a morning of such entire happiness, as that in which I drove round to the various cormorants, who had been annoying me for the last twelvemonths, with their remorseless dunnings. Great was their surprise at being thus suddenly paid off, and infinite their respects, accompanied with more than one touching request to know whether I required any thing further. My short reply of "never," seemed to be misunderstood by many of them, and to be a source of consternation to the rest.

Returning at night, a free man again, many a resolution did I form, that no inducements of my own comfort should ever bring on me such an annoyance in future, and though with thirty thousand a-year,

there would have been little excuse for resolving otherwise, still I could name so many men of much larger incomes, not knowing occasionally where to turn for a hundred pound note, that I thought such a resolution on my part one of considerable virtue.

At last the time arrived that Lady Isabella and myself should start for Beauvale, and we pictured to ourselves the consternation which would reign in Sir John's countenance, when he heard the son whom he had so treated, declared master of an income more than three times his own, and this even though he had made a runaway match; and as for ambition, piously I resolved that nothing should ever tempt me to think of it, while with regard to the Bar, much as I honoured it as a profession, still as one that had been converted into an instrument of torture towards me, and was in itself one of far harder labour than ever was that of hod and shovel, I was determined instantly to make a bonfire of my wig and gown.

We then conned over the different forms of manner, in which each of our relations

should be received, and more especially the brotherly youth who so generously offered me assistance at fifty-five per cent. from a conscientious Jew. We might have saved ourselves much trouble if, before thus minutely going into matters, we had waited till our arrival at Beauvale. Having passed the night a few miles off, we drove over early in the morning, and were at once shewn into the library, where the whole battalion of our relations were assembled. It never occurred, either to Isabella or myself, to ask who these might be, we had arrayed in our mind's eye, the whole *tableau* of the party from the Hall, and various others, making a charming family collection; but, on gaining the inside of the room, our surprise was considerable at perceiving none but two distant relatives, and, though we knew little of these, yet, as they had never mixed themselves up in my father's prosecution against myself, we received them very cordially. Well pleased was I to mark the delight that reigned in the eyes of Lady Isabella, as she gazed from the beautiful Hall of Beauvale over the wide extent of

all "the smiling landscape near," with a delighted eye that seemed to say to itself, "This magnificent prospect is my own—from this point of human greatness the greater part of what I see is mine." At length, a due time having been given for the arrival of the rest of the family, Mr. Fellworth proceeded to read the will. After the recital of the various properties, the testator gave away a host of small legacies, and then came the delightful clause as sole executor and residuary legatee: my dear godson and nephew, Miles Musgrave, second son of Sir John Musgrave, Baronet, of Musgrave Hall, &c. &c. During this reading I, who felt quite calm as to what was to follow, sat quiet and composed enough, but Lady Isabella, whose first case this was of taking any deep personal interest in such proceedings, trembled much, and I could feel her delicate hand shaking exceedingly, as it lay clasped in mine; what a warm pressure did it return to me, when the clause was read giving me the residuary legateship! Concluding the will was at an end, Isabella rose from her chair, flushed with intense delight.

“There are two codicils to read yet,” said Mr. Fellworth, “and they have been added in the handwriting of the deceased.”

Isabella scarcely seemed to know what “codicils” meant, but she resumed her seat while Mr. Fellworth read on:—

“Whereas I have been informed by my brother, Sir John Musgrave, that his second son, Miles Musgrave, aforesaid, has, by a course of wanton extravagance, become greatly involved in debt, and, whereas, I have this day received from the said nephew a letter, dated from “The King’s Bench,” now, as I have always resolved that I never would forgive any man who could sully our name by making himself the inmate of a gaol, I hereby revoke the appointment of my nephew, the said Miles Musgrave as my sole executor, and residuary legatee, and direct, instead, that the executor and residuary legatee herein after named, shall pay to the creditors of the said Miles Musgrave, the whole of his debts, as they may exist at the time of my decease, provided the said debts shall not exceed the sum of fifteen thousand

pounds. And I hereby direct and appoint my dear niece, Georgiana Musgrave, youngest daughter of Sir John Musgrave, of Musgrave Hall, to be my sole executrix, and residuary legatee, subject to the provisos to be named in a codicil, to be hereafter annexed to this my last will."

Dear as Georgiana was to me, and doubly so from her noble conduct, I felt when I heard this dreadful codicil read, as if it would be a relief to expire on the spot. I was about to spring from my chair and denounce the whole thing as a fabrication; deny that I ever had written such letter as that attributed to me, and, in short, pursue I know not what course of excitement and folly, when a shriek from Lady Isabella luckily diverted all my attention from myself to her, and I turned round just in time to catch her swooning in my arms, and save her from the ground. With some difficulty we bore her to an adjoining room, and, having waited her revival, I hastened back to the library to see what explanation I could gain of the extraordinary calamity which had just befallen me.

“Mr. Fellworth,” said I, “before I say anything with respect to this most extraordinary will, which I have just heard read, allow me to remark, that the codicil states as a fact, that which is utterly untrue. I never in my life wrote to my Uncle a letter dated from the King’s Bench, from this best of all good reasons, that I never was there to write one. What my father may have thought fit to communicate I know not; but I most strongly doubt the authenticity of this codicil—that can aver as a fact, and act upon as a truth, that which never had any existence, except in the assertion of that document, be it what it may, which I have just heard read.”

“Since you tell me, Sir, that you never were in the King’s Bench,” said Mr. Fellworth, somewhat drily, “I, of course, must believe you; but I think there must have been some mistake as to your never having written a letter dated from that place, since here is the very letter on which Mr. Miles Musgrave seems to have founded the alteration in his will. It is directed to him—it bears all the post marks of a genuine docu-

ment, and, unless I am strangely mistaken, it is in your handwriting—here it is Sir, as plain as possible.

“KING’S BENCH.”

“Will you allow me to look at it,” said I.

“Certainly,” replied Mr. Fellworth, placing in my hand the following letter.

12, King’s Bench, August 10.

“DEAR UNCLE,

“Here I am at last, the worst that I anticipated, in my letter to you a week since, has befallen me, and no words in my humble power to use can truly paint the anguish under which I am at present labouring.—But, in all my grief, my feeling is not for myself, but for my unhappy wife, who will now, I dread, feel doubly lonely and desolate. But, alas! resignation is all that remains to us. I wrote to you some time ago, to tell you how unfortunately I was placed in money matters. I know your generosity too well to say more. Do, my dear Uncle, write soon to your distressed and ever attached nephew and godson,

“MILES MUSGRAVE.”

As I read this letter, I looked at it over, and over, and over again, thrice the torment of the doomed seemed tearing me to atoms. I felt the colour forsake my cheek, and only wished that it would for ever leave my broken heart. I, by my own folly, my own carelessness, my own stupidity, had, I now saw, not only lost myself as noble a position as man ever held, either for his own, or for others' happiness, but, worse than all, had reduced my wife once more to those depths of poverty and want, from which, a few minutes since, my uncle's generosity had appeared for ever to raise her.

"Well, Sir," said Mr. Fellworth, who was watching all the changes of my countenance, "am I wrong in supposing that letter to be your writing?"

"It is, it is," cried I, tearing handfuls of hair from my head, "but it was written on a far different subject than that to which my uncle appears to have thought it related. I remember this letter well; it was written on the occasion of my poor wife losing her two little boys."

"But," said Mr. Fellworth, "what could

have induced you to date it from a prison. Why date it from the King's Bench if you had never been there?"

"The King's Bench!!" said I; "merciful Providence! it was a mere blunder of the pen, a mere absent error of a heart broken down with sorrow and anger; do not you see the letter is dated, 12, King's Bench, which is in reality the mere number of my old master, the Solicitor-General's chambers, 12, King's Bench Walk, in the Temple, for he brought me up to town that night in his carriage, from Lord Braynless', where we had been staying; only, from leaving out the word, Walk, my uncle who may, perhaps, never have received the former letter to which this alludes, must have taken it to refer to the King's Bench Prison, instead of to the row of chambers in the Temple."

"Merciful Heavens!" said Mr. Fellworth, laying down his pen, "this is, indeed, enough to drive any man distracted. Who can complain of what has been so often termed the foolish precision of lawyers, when the omission of a single word may thus lose a gentleman an estate of, at least, five-and-

thirty thousand['] a-year; for your uncle, Mr. Musgrave, has lived so['] prudently, the estate will be worth that, at the lowest penny.

CHAPTER XI.

“Come Death, for Grief can crush no more ;
My hopes, my struggles all are o’er ; ~
I am content to die.”—DARTUNIS.

LET me pass over the time that succeeded the dreadful codicil of my uncle. The rapid transition from brilliant expectations to dark despair ; the falling back once more from splendour and ease, to striving, struggling, care, and comparative poverty, was one for which the mind of Lady Isabella was less fitted, ~~perhaps~~, than that of any human being I ever encountered. Not only did she fret over it from morning till night, but at times, poor creature, she could not refrain from breaking out into the most bitter reproaches on myself, my folly, and thoughtlessness, and many other defects,

that, in that dire day of calamity, sprang forth to light, to plead, with trumpet-tongue, against me. While all the arguments that I could use, all the letters of dear Georgina, in which she, again and again, declared that she would share her uncle's legacy with me, so soon as she should come of age; all this did not suffice to win her from that hopeless, settled gloom, that, ever since the fatal morning of expected triumph in Beauvale library, had settled on her. Nay, even the rapidly increasing success, that attended me in my profession, fell unvalued on her attention.

This appeared to her a long hopeless struggle, which, to be successful in the end, must be conducted with extreme prudence and patience—patience to make a fortune, and prudence not to spend it—and contrasted painfully with her notions of the easy grandeur that must have attended the once almost certain possession of my uncle's estate. I confess, that when I found her utterly incorrigible, as far as persuasion went, and that reason appeared to have so little influence in moderating her annoy-

ances, I, too, began to resign, as a hopeless contest, the effort that sought to teach her how to bear, at least with dignity, if not comfort, our sad reverse of fortune.

I heard her bewailing, with comparative silence, and, engrossed in the absorbing details by which I could now alone ensure my independence in the world, I trusted that Time, that unfailing mediator, would bring round Isabella to the following of my example. A second invitation came from Lady Braynless, and as I could not accept it, at this moment, without considerable sacrifice, and, as it appeared to me unkind to refuse my wife the benefit which change of scene, and a gayer house would present, I no longer opposed her departure by herself, as she was to post down the short distance in her own chariot, and with her own servants. And now, at length, the fruits of ~~all~~ my fagging, my sleepless nights, my weary vigils, and early risings began to be returned to me. Hitherto my practice had chiefly been that which required slight appearance in court ; but now there approached the reality of that of which, before, my friends had only hailed

the dim shadow. The very client, to serve whom I had remained working till three in the morning, after the false intelligence that gave to me thirty thousand a-year in land, this very man had entrusted to my advice a suit, in which two companies were plaintiff and defendant, involving a sum little short of three millions sterling in value. Over this I fagged and toiled without ceasing. Often, till the sun streamed in at my chambers, had I sat sighing over the papers in this cause, determined rather to die over them than not win the day if it were possible, and then, for it was while Lady Isabella was on her visit at Braynless, I used to lie down on my cot, which, for that very case, I had slung in my chambers, and rise again at eight,—snatch a mouthful of refreshment—attend to my consultations on the business of the morning, requiring my immediate attendance in open court, and so go on battling, fighting, and arguing away—now as junior in one case—then as leader in another. Now in the Vice-Chancellor's court—then before the Master of the Rolls, and then in the court of the Lord Chancel-

lor. When on the last day on which, with an anxious heart, I was to go in and hear the decree in my great cause, my clerk, with a joyous face, brought me a cheque, in which the fee had just been paid, amounting to five hundred guineas, informing me that this made my income for that year, and there was yet a month to run in it, three thousand four hundred pounds.

“I am yet a young man,” thought I, “and how long will this last?” and as the glass was brought me to adjust my wig, I read in the face presented before me, how five years sorrow, and labour, and study, can effect the ravages of twenty passed in ease. And once, again, I drew a long deep sigh, at the folly that had made me abandon for such a struggle, however honoured, however wealthy, the sweet domestic career which my early youth had painted and desired in days of old!

Success is delicious, intoxicating—intense in its delight—far beyond all words; but, alas! even in that hour, conscious of victory, my thoughts reverted to Isabella—the lovely, the charming, the beloved. Not

gloomy, discontented, and unhappy, as she too often was now, but joyous, exquisite, as she either was, or appeared to be, or Fancy had painted her to be, when, for her sunny smiles, I abandoned all the little world that breathed for me beside.

Yes, success was here; but that chief charm, that would have blessed, that would have hallowed it, for which alone I once thought I could prize it, that was wanting, and was, I feared, never, to be recalled.—Alas! if I had only known that at this moment—but to my story.

I walked into court seemingly calm, imperturbable, and careless of all results, whatever they might be, as it was my custom generally to appear, but, in reality, so excited, so trembling, though not fearful, but nervous from want of sleep, and exercise, and quiet, ~~the~~ lines seemed to dance upon my briefs—and, as my pen moved over them, it appeared as if it involuntarily inclined to write other words than those my will dictated. At last the Chancellor came into court; and, after we had all risen and paid him our respects, he commenced read-

ing his judgment in our ‘great case.’ For sometime it was almost difficult—a difficulty that frequently seemed to be his delight—to say on which side his judgment would lean; at last, however, he approached the marrow of his argument, and I certainly exulted in all the vanity of the hour, when I heard several of the passages of his judgment almost echo, word for word, the opinion that I had given when the defendant’s case was first laid before me. And when he concluded, by giving the whole matter entirely in our favour, together with our costs, my delight and triumph were complete. I happened to have nothing more to detain me in court that day, and I hurried off to my chambers, to enjoy the extasy of writing to my wife, and reporting to her that success which put me for ever at my ease with regard to my profession, and laid open a most brilliant future, from the results of which I now knew that I should, with ease, be able to save Isabella from ever feeling, to any extent worth mentioning, the cruel disappointment she had suffered with regard to my uncle’s property.

It was late when I finished the letter to my wife. Fever, excitement, and over labour had taken away all appetite for food that day ; so, as my consultation did not come on for several hours, I took a bath and retired to rest till eight o'clock, at which time I was to be called to renew the rolling of the stone of *Sisyphus*.

For once, I fell asleep. My feelings were those of satisfaction, if not happiness ; and, unschooled by the past, untaught by the constant recurrence of one calamity after another, I dreamed, Vain Fool, that I might yet, in some nook or corner of the world, some station undiscovered among mankind, and, under some fancied combination of circumstances, at last enjoy some brief passages of unalloyed tranquillity, if not content.

CHAPTER XII.

· Hymen, lo Hymen !—Hymen do they shout !”

EDMUND SPENSER.

Two days past after my despatching my letter to Lady Isabella, and the return post arrived from Braynless ; when, instead of that warm reply of congratulation which I naturally expected, I received a formal note from my aversion — my sister-in-law—in-
forming me that she had returned my letter, because Lady Isabella a few days since set out on her return to London, and had, she doubted not, long before I could get that note, returned to our cottage. I confess I felt rather annoyed at this stated fact ; but being able that evening to get away from London, I rode down myself, anticipating with delight the meeting before me.

Up to this period I had refrained from communicating to Isabella 'the happy progress affairs were taking, fearful that it should prove but one of those momentary passages of success, that leave one only still more in despair. Now, however, I felt justified in believing that I had made a permanent stand; and from this time forth I had every reason to cherish the brightest professional hopes: musing on the mode on which these would be received—the good effects which they would produce on my wife's character and disposition, I rang at my own gate, and, as soon as a servant came out, I exclaimed while dismounting, "When did Lady Isabella come back?"

"She has not come back, yet Sir," was the reply, "but there is a letter for you in the library, which we thought was to fix the time of her return. It came yesterday, Sir, and would have been sent to you, but we made sure you would be down last night."

Why, I scarcely knew at the time, but I felt strangely agitated on hearing this intelligence—hastening into the house, I found

the letter as described, and, on opening it, read as follows :—

“ *Holyhead.*

“ There are some errors and mistakes into which the wisest of mankind may fall, and this was evidently the case with both of us, when we imagined that the love between us was of a stamp that could not die, or rather that our dispositions were suited for perpetual companionship, and the endurance of every privation.

“ Still, I confess I have been less disappointed in you than in myself. Finding how much I overrated my own ability, to endure the trials of poverty, I have determined to relieve you from the burden of a wife little suited to remain by your side, during all the struggles you have still to make. Destiny has also brought me in contact with another, fated to attract my attention.

“ As the past is for ever over between us, all I have to ask you is, to throw no unnecessary impediment in the path of my future happiness, and to turn your atten-

tion and regards, to some one better able to perfect your enjoyment than

“ ISABELLA.”

•Six times did I read over these lines, before the intensity of my surprise allowed me to perceive, that this was a cool announcement to me by the being I had most cherished on earth, that she had deserted me in that contest which an union with herself had brought upon me, and which I had incurred simply and solely from my love to her ; and that my affection, while it was thus to be repaid by abandonment, was turned to madness and fury, by her wanton elopement with another. No words, that a tranquil pen can put on paper, would suffice to describe the torment of that moment. My chief feeling was a strange, wild doubt, if such a ~~thing~~ could be possible—if the letter must not be a forgery, and next an overwhelming, burning intensity and thirst for vengeance, on the head of the being who had dared to do me this wrong, and put such slight upon my name. Had she merely left my home to return to her own

father—the agony of that separation, severe, no doubt, would still have been comparatively trifling! I might still have gone into society without bearing about me, the moment my name was mentioned, a pretext for the sneers, and scoffs, and jibes of fools around—I might yet have hoped that the future would be productive of some kind change; but here, while I was made an object for “the cold, unmoving finger of scorn to point at,” the future could offer no point of hope to relieve the horrors of the present; I should ever be, long as I might exist—the deserted and dishonoured husband:—and that she should leave me in this heartless manner, after I, who had borne so much for her—endured so much from her, and toiled with such a slavery to render back to her that station in the world she formerly held!—The blow was dreadful. At the very moment that it was won, her hand struck thus violently down to the dust, dishonourably from my lips, the cup of mingled love and joy!

“But no,” said I, dashing the weakness from my eye, “this is quite clear, she

never was worthy of a single grief from me!—Never again will I sorrow for losing that passing, trivial affection, which it was my greatest misfortune to gain!—but for him, whoever this fool-hardy butterfly may be, who has dared to step between me and my honour, as the Lord lives in Heaven, he shall rue this outrage to a Musgrave.” And all the blood of our race that had stagnated since Agincourt, seemed rushing round my heart, as I resolved on some signal atonement for so deadly an insult. Picking up Lady Isabella’s letter from the floor, where I had stamped on it in the wildness of my fury, I read it once again, to see if there was no clue to her seducer, and I then first beheld these lines :—

“ That there may not appear to be anything like underhand dealing or deceit in relation to the step I have deliberately taken, I may here mention, that I have resolved to unite my fate to that of Lord Ulswater, who has accompanied me to Holyhead, on our road to Dublin.”

“ Your fate to his !” cried I, grinding my

teeth with rage. “ Ill-fortuned possessor of beauty, is it so? Then the fortune of both is death !”

Crushing up the letter I held in my hand, I rang for my horse to be re-saddled ; and, late as was the hour, set off at once on my return to London, to find out my friend, Admiral Barton. Being fortunate in this, in another half-hour we were posting as fast as four horses could take us for Holyhead.

* * * * *

Over that which followed let me draw the veil of a brief history.

I found Lord Ulswater and Lady Isabella had gone from Dublin to Killarney, and, following his Lordship immediately, an early hour was appointed for our meeting by the shores of that beautiful lake, so famed for any purpose but that which now animated the breasts of the two combatants.

After exchanging four shots, I left the ground severely wounded ; but that I recked little, for that ground supported the corpse of him who had thought to disgrace me with impunity. For some time it was

very doubtful whether my own wounds would not enable me for ever to escape the burden of existence.

After a long, painful dream of delirium, I at last awoke, and one of my first efforts of returning strength was made, I well remember, to pay a visit to a tomb-stone in a neighbouring church, which, solemn as was its subject, strangely lied—since it asserted, that, in the vault beneath that monument reposed the remains of Charles, sixth Earl of Ulswater, and Lady Isabella, his wife.

“What, then,” said I, striving through the mists of illness that still obscured my reason, “is she really dead?—so young—so beautiful—so winning!”—Terrible as had been her offence against me, the last remains of anger faded from my heart, as I recalled all we had once been to each other; and, sinking on the melancholy slab that told the fatal tale, I wept with all the passionate anguish of a lover.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ A gown made of the finest wool,
With buckles of the purest gold.”

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.

FROM much that came to my knowledge in after years, little reason was left me to doubt that Isabella had been the victim of a deliberate plot, laid by her own sister. Not, it is true, with any intent to ruin and destroy her, but from that officious and unprincipled intermeddling to which I have already alluded, and which led her to imagine that the man who had detached her from my side would ultimately wed her himself, and thus she would gain in society the rank and position she was supposed to have forfeited, by her union with myself.

For her father, there had been a period at which a sudden and fatal illness of his daughter—for, as I afterwards learned, she only survived the shock of the duel some eight-and-forty hours—would almost have terminated his existence too ; but now, like herself, he had found some fresh object on which to bestow his unstable affections, and the news of Isabella's untimely fate fell almost unheeded on his worldly soul.

His last daughter had now been married nearly a year, and the Marquis was, at the very period of the duel, busily engaged in wooing the fair offspring of a gallant general to become his bride, she being herself three years younger than his youngest child. However, this proved no obstacle ; and, two months after Isabella was laid in her unhallowed grave, her father presided at the marriage-feast of his second wedding. And this was the world for whose honours I, disappointed, blighted, broken-hearted, was to strive !

Oh, how enthusiastically I cursed the hated herds of life, in every style, and form, and circumstance ! How I loathed the cor-

rupt mass in which I writhed along, detesting the penalty of existence, and yet not daring to free myself from its payment. And yet I had no resource but to strive with the struggler, and apparently to set as high a value on the empty baubles of mankind as the veriest fool amidst its crowds. What else was left for me ?

Could I now retire to the closet to enjoy meditation and calm thought, what dreadful image would follow me to my solitude, and poison that pure well of reflection, from which alone I could draw a single joy ! Oh no ! it was only amid the intense excitement of my profession—the hourly, momentary, ceaseless crash of events, the endless engrossments of business—the forced and false interests of knave and fool, together fighting round me—that I could at all hurry from myself, and escape the torment of the past !

Those who are thus fearfully bound to the oar seldom pull in vain ; my ill-omened bark shot well a-head. Years passed on—money came rolling in upon me in all directions, unable to buy happiness—and ho-

nours came unsought—deprived of any power to please—when, one day, at the termination of a long-fought case, as I was leaving the court, the usher touched me on the shoulder, and delivered a message from the Chancellor, desiring a few minutes' conversation in his own room. I immediately hurried round, and found waiting his Lordship, with whom for some time I had now enjoyed the pleasure of a private acquaintance.

In a few words, he explained, that it was the intention of his Majesty, in the following week, to give the rank of King's counsel to several members of the Bar, and that he was authorised by his Majesty to include me in the number, if such a step should be at all agreeable.

Thus, suddenly assailed on such a point, I felt I was at liberty to express some doubt on the matter—not as to the honour of the appointment, but as to how far I might venture to aspire to such a step without injury to my professional prospects.

“ I think, Mr. Musgrave,” said his Lordship, smiling, “ this is one of those cases in

which even I should not doubt." Now, for a man so very wary as the Chancellor was known to be, I felt this was saying a great deal; and, as he had always shown himself to be most kindly inclined on my behalf, it induced me at once to say—

"Your Lordship's words are my best guide, so I will only, therefore, in conclusion, assure you that I accept with thankfulness the honour your Lordship is pleased confer upon me, and trust that in my hands it will always be held with the utmost fidelity."

His Lordship then wished me every success with my silk gown, and I withdrew. As I slowly walked along to my residence, which was a small one, overlooking Hyde Park, musing on the unsolicited advancement thus proffered to me, and, as the old writers say, admiring the coquetry of fortune, perpetually showering her favours on those that most condemn her, while she gives to others, who are her really devout slaves, no more than the mere satisfaction of being her worshippers, I could not but smile at the little value

that a silk gown, or any other shining robe now bore in my estimation—unable as it was to bring joy to the bruised heart that was to beat beneath it.

“I remembered also to how many such an announcement would have proved a source of the highest gratification and delight. Yet to these men, in all probability, that distinction was doomed never to be offered, or even granted if sought. To most men it is an honour generally long solicited before given.

“And when,” thought I, “is this distinction to alight on me? On what day is it to please His Majesty’s Judges to call within the tabooed pale of the Bar, he who has no longer any care whether he stands among the crowd or the crowded—the admired or the admirers?” And then it occurred to me, listless gladiator that I was, to ask what further honours would fortune choose to throw at my weary feet; and what varied destiny was still in store for me. “And here,” said I, “it might be a source of some excitement, now that the game brings one in contact with the movers of the petty world of

struggling fellow man, it might be some amusement to put down, from time to time, one's observations, experiences, and adventures amid the herd;" and thus I determined for the first time to keep a journal.

As the diary proceeded, strange to say, instead of its becoming tinctured with that melancholy which chiefly marked my own character, it assumed the lively air of one, determined to be amused at the expense of the motley crowd around him, and, instead of the solitary and the sad, being chosen, and predominating in the narrative, I seemed to seize with avidity, the ludicrous, the laughable, and the absurd—so that many a dull and weary hour has been amused by this harmless expedient; and often, when matters requiring nice distinctions of character have come before me, I have recalled the passages of my previous existence, remembered points in which they seemed to me to be fraught with a useful lesson—and, turning to the page, I there found transcribed, as if for the very guidance of the moment, the lessons, reflections and, experiences, derived from the

passing hour. Among other passages in my Journal, were several not wholly unconnected with the foregoing story of my own sorrows, and as a counter balance to the miseries I have narrated of myself, I will follow the thread till it becomes coloured with a more lively hue.

From time to time, as my progress onward in the world continued toward the final bourne of seven feet by three, I, of course, heard at various times of different members of the Marquis' family, but, still most industriously shunned the brood as much as possible. Thus, I endeavoured to forget the cruelty with which I had been treated, and which had so nearly fallen back upon the head of its perpetrator.

The Marquis who, as there grew around him in plentiful abundance a second young family, must often, I thought, have been dreadfully reminded of the fate of that favourite child, towards whose melancholy doom his own pride and coldness of heart had formed the initiative.

Still the Marquis' name seemed destined to be borne down by beautiful descendants,

for the family of his second wife enjoyed the reputation of being, the ladies, to the full as beautiful as those of the first, and the men quite as handsome. Of the latter, the notoriety for heedless recklessness of conduct, was quite as high as any that the Marquis himself had enjoyed, in his most juvenile days, and the handwriting and acceptances of the Dunvext family were as well known among the Jews, as the character of the Hebrew letter. One of the sons of this second family had, I perceived, been sent into the army, and another into the navy, and so on.

The Dunvexts enjoyed, in short, the usual provision for a noble house, at the expense of those base mechanics who sudorize for their daily bread, and then have the satisfaction of hearing their children's cries for food, without having the ability to give them any better satisfaction of their wants than the lying and conceited boastings of some state empiric.

However, to our tale:—many, many years after the mournful events already narrated, I was walking one afternoon slowly along

Piccadilly, thinking over the expenses of my forthcoming election, when, if I succeeded in being returned to Parliament, I should, for the third time, be entrusted with the franchise of my fellow-citizens ; when, just as I reached that point at which Albemarle-street opens, opposite to that of St. James's, I came to a dead halt ; again I experienced, for the first time during many years, that singular sensation of the heart, as if the tides of life were approaching their cessation, that collapse and dreadful impression of fear, which bears witness to some strong and sudden emotion, and, as of yore, once more this strange excitement was produced by the sight of a human face, which, wonderful to say, was not that of a woman. Just as I was about to cross, a plain britchska, with a coronet and some military ensignia, pendant from the garter encircling the crest, rolled quickly up St. James's-street. It contained an elderly lady and a young girl, but fair, as at a glance, I perceived her to be,—it was not those soft features which caused such a revulsion in my blood. The origin of this stood nearer

to me. My own walking pace had been that of a slow, methodical and musing man ; for, if the truth must be told, I was now fast becoming an ‘elderly gentleman,’ one who had seen too much of life to hurry his paces by a single stride. For, fast or slow, by equal route they take him to his grave.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ All powerful love subdues his savage soul.”

JOSEPH WARTON.

WHILE I was yet pausing on the kerbstone, to allow the carriage from St. James's-street to roll by, there came swiftly past me a young man in the very bloom of youth. On the instant that his countenance struck my eye, swift as an electric shock, there ran through my whole frame the sensation I have attempted to describe; scarcely was it possible that man and woman could be more like to one another, than that blooming, fresh, joyous creature was to the poor lost Isabella. The memories of ages seemed concentrated in that single moment, and I felt my soul fascinated once more, as of old,

by the remarkable and winning picture of beauty on which I gazed.

“Such,” muttered I, with a sigh, “had they lived, must have been my unhappy boys, and, as there rapidly glanced through my mind a picture of the delight I should have felt in dedicating my whole soul to the love of such an intelligent, fine, manly looking creature, there arose before me the dark cloud of Isabella’s transgression, and at once perished the desire that any son of mine should have lived to call me father, and yet be able to reflect upon a mother’s shame. Still I could not help acknowledging the strongest interest in the young stranger’s countenance, when suddenly, with a rash impetuosity of youth, so like to the dear but faulty being that had perished, he dashed forward across the foot of Albemarle-street, to reach the other side before the approaching vehicle came up. Instinctively I resolved, though I scarcely knew why, to follow him, and ascertain his name, and the place of his residence; but not until the carriage had passed; for though the activity of youth might easily have enabled him to gain the opposite side

of the street in safety, I felt that, for my less active limbs, the effort was one not unaccompanied with danger. Fancy, then, what was my horror, feeling as I did, to see him, instead of making the best of his way across, suddenly halt in the middle of the street—make no effort to progress forward, nor take the slightest step to retreat, but stand as if spell bound in the centre of the road, exposed to the utmost danger of being run over, gazing, nevertheless, at the carriage most intensely, though I could scarcely define for what purpose, and standing so immediately in the way of the horses, that they could not fail to run over him, unless the course of the carriage was altered by the coachman, who did not appear to see over the necks of the horses he was driving. Several of the mob shouted, and some of the ladies screamed, but of these demonstrations in his behalf the stranger took no notice, apparently deaf, or, from the noise that the carriage made, unable to hear. Had it been any other person in whom I was less concerned, I should have allowed such carelessness or obstinacy to have met

the true reward of broken neck or limbs, but the interest I felt in this stranger seemed to impel me to his side, in defiance of that cold philosophy that had now become the general rule and guide of life : I could not stand by and see coldly trampled in the dust, that living likeness of one so long all in all to me.

Darting forward till I gained the middle of the road, I heard him muttering to himself, as I seized his arm and dragged him almost from under the carriage wheels,—

“What a lovely creature ! what an exquisite face !” his eyes fixed all the while on the fair young girl who was one of the occupants of the carriage, that had nearly driven over him, and who seemed to have been entertaining some notions similar to his own ; since surely nothing less could have caused such engrossment in one so young and fair, as to return stedfastly a gentleman’s gaze, without detecting that the wheels which bore her along in ease and safety, threatened him with instant annihilation.

With considerable difficulty, I succeeded in dragging the youth from this point of his

attraction, and, as I did so, he still continued to gaze upon the carriage, until it was fairly lost to view, muttering all the time, till it fairly rolled away—

“ Well, that is the most lovely creature ; what exquisite eyes—what a divine expression ! By Jove she is an angel.”

I saw at once that I had got hold of some original, and the enthusiastic love he seemed to entertain for personal beauty, made me feel more than ever desirous to ascertain who he was, and, if such a thing should be possible, befriend him. For, alas ! who had I now to care for, beyond those chance and casual acquaintance we all form on the great thoroughfare of life, and though, as we advance, we rarely make new friendships, and never with those of our own standing, still the heart of the old pilgrim springs towards those young and yet unblighted spirits, for whom our natural emotions of pity paint, in perspective, all the deep sorrows they have yet to know, and that final sense of disappointment which, worse than all, awaits every one of us in turn, as we at last discover the fruit of

our hopes to be no more than the cheating apples of the Dead Sea-shore, all beauty to the eye, but ashes at the heart. As soon as the carriage had fairly rolled out of sight, my new acquaintance turned sharply round to me, and, rubbing his arm, which he extracted from my fingers, exclaimed,—

“Hallo, old boy, you pinch devilish sharply, I can tell you, while you are about it; however, I suppose, as the parson said when he stole the marine officers’ grog, ‘Its all for the best, Sam,’ so I am much obliged to you. But I should not have been run over, though you seemed to think so. But who is that gone by? Faith, what a beautiful creature!”

“Really, I do not know,” replied I; “but if you will give me your card, I will endeavour to find out, and I will let you know.”

“Well, you are a devilish good hand at a quiz,—you are, old go-to-windward; but, I suppose, I must not quarrel with you, so good morning.”

And before I could utter a word to assure my sensitive friend that I meant no

quiz at all, but, in reality, was only desirous of a good excuse to find out who and what he himself was; he went off once more at a tangent, muttering to himself—

“Lovely girl—beautiful creature—must find out who she is,—see her again, if possible. Most beautiful face, truly,” and so on.

However, I was determined not to be thus put off; so few objects of interest occurred to me in my life beyond the mere circle of my profession, that all my former obstinacy here returned, and I resolved I would find out who and what he was, at all hazards.

Turning back from my own route, and following him, therefore, at a distance, and hurrying my old man's pace to do so, we passed by the Albany, then Sackville-street, then Air-street, and finally he paused in Regent-circus, as if undecided whether to bend his steps towards Pall-mall or the Regent's-park. The latter locality, however, seemed to find the most favour in his eyes, and thitherward went he.

I still followed in his rear, asking to myself frequently, what it was that I proposed, and whether it was not absurd, to be thus

the sport of whim, and whether I had not been sufficiently warned, that this especial cast of feature assured no warranty of those stable qualities on which alone can be formed friendship worth possessing.

Still my obstinacy seemed to urge me on, when suddenly I espied one of my old pupils at the Bar coming my way. He was on the other side of the stranger, advancing to meet him, as it were face to face, and evidently he saw me, for he came on, holding out his hand.

My astonishment was considerable, when the object of all my curiosity interrupted young Pierrepont—for that was my pupil's name—seized the outstretched hand, and shook it as heartily as if it had purposely been intended for his greeting.

“What is the meaning of this, Sir?” exclaimed Pierrepont, who was himself by no means wanting in that unfortunate quality which men term tetchiness, and thought that the other must mean a joke in what he had done, though a very ill-timed one. While I, in order to prevent any quarrel between the two parties, in each of whom

I had a separate interest, was in a moment at their side.

“What do I mean?” replied the stranger, laughing heartily at the other’s angry tone and gesture. “Why, I mean simply to say this—How do you do, Richard Plantagenet Pierrepont? and what do you mean, in thus utterly forgetting George Dunvext?”

“Good Heaven!” I exclaimed in a voice so loud, and so excited, as instantly to draw upon myself the attention of both the young men, who were now very cordially shaking hands.

Pierrepont looked round, and seeing, no doubt, in my face the emotion under which I laboured, put out his arm as if to save me from falling, while his companion did the same, exclaiming—

“Hallo, old Quiz, are you coming up to give us another pinch of the arm? Devilish sharp that was of you, I’ve no doubt, and not very pleasant.”

“How are you, Sir? Are you better now?” said Pierrepont; and then at once defining the cause of my excitement, he added, “Shall I introduce him to you, or not?”

“Certainly, yes,” replied I; and my old pupil turning round to his companion, said—

“Lord George Dunvext, allow me to introduce you to my old master and kind friend, Mr. Musgrave.”

“What!” exclaimed Lord George, eagerly, “What! Miles Mulgrave, the King’s counsel! *

“Yes,” said Pierrepont.

“My dear brother-in-law, how glad I am to have met you,” heartily exclaimed Lord George, shaking me warmly by the hand; and thus, then, it was, I once more became acquainted with one of the family of Isabella.

* The reader will bear in mind, the date of the tale refers to a period of many years since.

CHAPTER XV.

He knew no more about Divinity,
Than other 'Fellows' do of Trinity."

CANTAB.

"WELL, my dear George," said Pierrepont, kindly anxious to introduce some subject that should allow me to regain my composure, "what may you have been doing since we last parted in the Bay of Naples? I believe you have left the Navy; haven't you?"

"Oh, yes—pitched it to the devil."

"Well, and won't you go back into it again?"

"Oh, no," said his Lordship; "I have been back into it twice. It's no use going back into it any more; it is a hateful service—so crammed with tyranny—a gentle-

man can't follow his little amusements with any sort of advantage."

"Well, then" said Pierrepont, "if you are quite positive as to not going again into the Navy, I suppose you will turn your thoughts to the Army."

"O no, d—n the Army, I shall go into the Church!" and with this somewhat grave declaration of his serious intentions towards the clerical profession, his Lordship turned his laughing blue eyes on me, and added, "Of course, my dear brother, when you are Lord Chancellor, I shall expect you will give me a good Deanery."

I said nothing to this, but I thought to myself—if chance, in her medley changes, should ever pop me into a Chancellor's robe, and you be in a condition, master George, to don a clerical one, I fear not all the duties of keeping the King's conscience, would induce me to refuse to that face a Bishopric itself, if it chose to sigh for one; and even in every tone of voice, and in manner, at every step we took, more and more strongly his Lordship reminded me of the once loved—dead. And here,

perhaps, some of my junior readers may marvel how a man, outraged as I had been, could ever recur to the image of Isabella with any thing like tenderness or regard.' Those who have lived more years in the world would be able to answer such an enquiry with ease.

Time had exerted her hallowing influence over the remembrance of that unprosperous sufferer—Time had calmed my own passions—Time had taught me the impossibility of ever replacing the space she had filled in my existence; and often, in those silent hours of the night, when sleep fled from a feverish pillow, I found opportunity to ask myself—whether I might not possibly have been too little inclined to make allowance, for that natural repining which I ought to have foreseen—whether I might not have been, if not more tender, at least more forbearing, and less readily irritated by the complaints that her destiny might have forced from her, against her better nature.

However, more than all, I remembered, that if her fault had been signal, she had atoned for it with her existence, and the

latent fierceness of Agincourt still whispered with blameable ferocity in my ear, "Upon her tempter and betrayer you were well avenged!"

At any rate, whether these were natural feelings or not, they influenced me. I never professed to guide my motions by those of other men, but simply to feel, and judge, and act for myself; and if the deeds to which this turn of mind led me were such, as my own calm conscience could approve, it would have mattered not to me, if a whole world in arms had followed hooting and howling in my ear. I could have been deaf to their reproaches, and have smiled at their wrath.

I had to thank no human being for the luxuries with which I had surrounded myself, and if there were points of my private history which sufficed for my own reflection and approval, that was all that I cared to know.

Full then of musings of times gone by, while my young friends talked, I listened, marvelling in my own mind what would be the fate of this young likeness of Isabella,

and whether his habits and pursuits were such, that my intention of proving serviceable to him could be carried into effect.

“Go into the Church!” said Pierrepont, repeating the last somewhat singular expression of his friend, “You are a pretty fellow, truly, to talk about going into the Church in that way; but I suppose your father has some tolerable fat livings in his gift.

“Why no,” said Lord George, “I wish he had; he has plenty of livings in point of number, though I suppose I cannot hold above four or five, and the highest is not more than four or five hundred a-year. One good fat Rectory would be worth them all, because, though I might be the devil to preach, even I have doubts whether I could preach in six places at once.

“Fie, fie, George,” said Perrepont, “do not talk such nonsense as to think of going into the Church, for which you are no more suited than it would suit you; do the same wise thing that our friend here and myself have done. Though at a long distance, I venture to couple my name with such so-

ciety. However, follow our example, and come to the Bar. That is the only true and noble profession for an English gentleman. If you are of a high spirit, it is the most independent; if you desire luxury, it is the most wealthy profession; if you desire fame, it leads to the highest honours; if you are fond of the society of men of intellect, you will find grouped around you the sharpest and keenest abilities the country can boast; while, if you are a philosopher, you will see the human character in its innermost recesses; if you are a philanthropist, your object is the noblest on earth, to assist in administering justice between man and man; and if your inclinations tend towards science, you will embark in the cultivation of the beautiful in its nature, noble in its end, and refined to the utmost point of subtlety. Surely if you are in want of a profession, and inclined to work, what branch of human industry can offer such opportunities for a sharp, clever head like yours, where, if a man can only learn to talk and read to effect, wealth and fame lie open to him."

“Devilish fine, master Piérrepoint; and to hear you talk, one would imagine there never had existed such a thing yet as a briefless Barrister; however, as you praise it so highly, I suppose you are getting on; or do you want to pull another unfortunate dog into the same scrape as yourself. What says my silent brother here?”

“Why,” I replied, “if a man has a good memory, a stern, determined perseverance, not easily put down, and great application, with no fear of work of the most severe kind known within the four seas that girt great Britain, then I say, let him come to the Bar, where, no doubt, a high destiny, more or less, awaits him; but if he has not these qualities, and these well tested too, let him shun a crushed or broken heart, and keep within the pale of some ambition that, from having less glitter to lure all ranks to its standard, is neither so fertile of rivals, nor possesses them of so formidable a stamp. In Great Britain, and in all countries where freedom thrives, men who can both speak well and write well, must ever hold a most formidable position, for these are the arts

to which Freedom owes her birth, and with which she will either sink or rise, and where freedom has once been tasted in all the excellence which it is capable of attaining, it will ever remain a blessing prized above all others, and so rewarding its votaries in the highest degree. From freedom flows equal laws, and these can never be administered without able judges, nor can able judges be reared, save from an able Bar. This is my theory, on which the prosperity of our order is, I think, secured, by its involving the best interests of mankind. You can judge yourself, whether you have the requisites to succeed in it; if so, I say with Pierrepont—Come on, it will be the best day's work you ever did when you get called to the Bar. But remember, if you do not succeed, do not blame me; I have told you the requisites for success, and they are of no easy nature; many a noble intellect exists without possessing them."

"At any rate," returned his Lordship, "there will be no harm in trying it for a year or two, at eighteen a man has yet a few months to spare for a moral experiment or two."

“Are you, indeed, only eighteen?” said I, quite startled at that to me almost childish age, to see so fine a stripling, and who appeared at least to be three or four-and-twenty.

“Only eighteen, my dear fellow,” said Lord George, “why, how old would you have me? to me it is perfectly melancholy; and I sometimes sit and think of so many glorious years gone by of fun and frolic, that will not be coming back again to a fellow in a hurry. But how long will it take to get called to the Bar?”

“Oh! only five years,” said Pierre-point.

“Lord, why, that is a trifle,” said the other. “I shall then only be twenty-three; come then, I will try it; it will be a good excuse for bleeding the Marquis, and a fellow must remain in town, must he not, all the five years?”

“Oh yes! that is indispensable, George, in order to eat your terms.”

“Eat my terms! is that the way a man becomes a lawyer?”

“Yes, that is the way, Sir.”

“ Hang it! how droll! I have often heard that lawyers are famous for swallowing their own words; no wonder that they should be open to this weakness when they are forced to commence their studies by eating their terms; though I suppose the greater will produce the less, will it not so, Mr. King’s counsel?”

“ Why, yes,” said I, “ there is no doubt of that, and now, if you two boys have nothing better to do, and will come and dine with me this evening, at half-past seven, and this freak about the Bar still lasts, I will see about getting your name entered at Lincoln’s Inn.”

“ At Lincoln’s Inn,” said Lord George, “ I am sure I will not go to Lincoln’s Inn, if I do go to the Bar at all, I must insist on going to the Temple.”

“ Why so?” I enquired, surprised that he even knew the difference.

“ Because there is something more historical, poetical, in short, about the Temple; and, moreover, the Templars were always a roistering set of galliards, and roistering is my forte. I shall not feel myself quite

so much at a loss for the navy, so long as I have some excuse for carrying on the war. Yes, yes, I will be a Templar; they are the jolly boys! It was a devilish good thought of you, Pierrepont, and I am much obliged to you, I shall like going a barristering it very much; it must be such fun bullying those old fogies, the judges. You all bully the judges, do you not, Musgrave, my boy?" and his Lordship honoured me with a slap on the back that made me reel again.

"Why, really, my Lord," said I, somewhat staggered, not only by the nature of the question, but by the mode of putting it, "I'm afraid, if you set out with the notion of 'bullying the Judges,' you will be rather in the situation of the young man who caught a Tartar. Those illustrious personages being not very easily bullied, even by folks who are masters of their weapons, much less by mere tyros; but you must not appeal to me in the matter, for you must know that in equity we are all far too gentlemanly to have any bullying at all. I have heard the term used among men of the Nisi Prius Bar. And on that ground,

therefore, Pierrepont will be your authority—the bullying, however, I suspect, generally goes on upon the opposite side to what you have it—though, to the honour of the profession be it said, those Judges that manifest a tendency to bully are few and far between.—‘Bullying’ being the resource of a mind too ignorant of real professional knowledge, to command that weight of public opinion, which the cowardly and shallow seek to usurp, by the ungentlemanly exhibition of bad temper. My advice to you, therefore, will be, to wait till any one attempts to bully you, then lay on the rod with all the ill nature in your power; always return to every one the exact sort of treatment first displayed towards yourself—and let it be known that you do so, and you will soon meet with civility and respect, if merely from the natural desire of mankind to receive it in return. However, these are all future matters, on which, if you really should resolve to go to the Bar, I will take care to school you well hereafter. Now then, while I go and attend to some affairs that press on my attention, do you two

pursue your own amusements. Pierrepont knows my mignonette-box in Park-lane, we will enjoy a cozy bachelor's dinner, and then adjourn to my stalls at the Opera."

"Upon my soul, you are just the fellow that I have been longing to fall in with for an age," said my friend of eighteen, giving me, in his young enthusiasm, a second cuff on the spine, that set me coughing for some seconds. But as he had not yet joined the Bar, and had still to acquire a knowledge of the respect due to King's Counsel, as well as the impracticability of "bullying" his Majesty's judges, I contented myself with smiling at those boyish spirits which must sooner or later be tamed out of him, and waving my hand for a temporary adieu, we parted company for the time.

CHAPTER XVI.

“These be rewards for such,
As live and love too much.”

UNCERTAIN.

As, perhaps, it may save some little trouble, I pass over at this moment the long interval that elapsed between the foregoing day, and that on which Lord George Dunvext was, as he had declared he would be, called to the Bar, by the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple. During the progress of his studies, if they are to be so called, for I believe he studied a great deal the horses at Tattersall's, and the dancers at the Italian Theatre, I had frequent opportunities of keeping him pretty well under my eye.

His extravagance I saw was enormous,

something frightful for a young man, who had little or nothing to anticipate—his love of pleasure immense, and his idleness proportionate. But, considering myself in the light of an old friend, I constantly attempted to impress upon him that he never could possibly succeed at the Bar, unless all his habits underwent an entire change; but, as often as I touched upon this subject, he used to reply:—

“My dear fellow, that’s an extremely disagreeable subject, I wish you would’nt broach it; but as you will still persist in doing so for my good, as you call it, I’ll take care also that it shall be for my pleasure, since, whenever you begin to talk about my not doing for the Bar, I vow I’ll ask you to lend me fifty pounds straight upon the instant.”

“And suppose,” said I, “I won’t do it.”

“Why then,” replied his Lordship, “if you don’t, I won’t come near you for six months.”

“Well then,” said I, “I’ll take leave to take fifty pounds worth of conversation on this subject now to start with, and I can

have as much more, you know, whenever I think it necessary."

"Oh! certainly," said he, and then sitting down, I immediately wrote out a cheque for the desired amount and handed it over to him—when he immediately folded it up, put it in his pocket, and said—

"Now then, my dear fellow, you may lecture me till my next appointment, which being with a lady, I am sure you will not think of trespassing on it. But that will do in an hour and a half yet," drawing out his watch, and patiently hearing to an end all I had to say.

"My dear fellow, I assure you you don't know me—honour bright! There are hours and hours—when I trim my midnight lamp—that no one knows any thing about. Frequently, I assure you, have I gone to bed at two,—three—four, aye and five o'clock, no one guessing anything about it."

"Yes," said I, "but ten to one when you did so, you went to bed in a state which the learned would call ebrious, or the vulgar exceedingly drunk."

"Why, my dear Musgrave," he coolly

replied, "thou Council of Monarchy," his favourite term for a silk gown, "if matters come to so nice a point in the law that this makes any difference, I must confess that your apprehensions are right."

"Well, but my dear fellow, is not that getting drunk very dreadful."

"Dreadful! oh dear, no! quite the reverse; the getting drunk is exceedingly pleasant, it's the getting sober again that's to be so much deplored; therefore, my advice to a man is, when once you are drunk, keep so, at least for a decent period, for nothing is more detestable than labour in vain. But let me alone, my dear fellow, I assure you, I quite feel my way. You'll see, some bright morning, early in June, I shall make a hit at the Bar that will quite astonish your weak mind, so much so, that you shall grow quite pale with anger, envy, and despair; pine, die, and expire to slow music."

With such a giddy rattle, I soon found that it was no use to attempt anything like sober argument, and therefore, after many efforts thereat, I gave that matter up in

pure despair; and confined myself, in my exertions for his personal service, to bantering him, in a jesting way, about every second month, or six times a year, on any matter that I might have heard to his prejudice, and to which I wished to direct his attention. But, whenever this took place, he invariably started from his seat, saying;—

“May it please you, Most Learned Master, is this to be one of your law lectures?” and on my answering him in the affirmative, he used to point to the palm of his left hand, with the index finger of his right, saying as he did so—“I believe the fee has not been paid in this case, has it?” On which my only answer was—

“Not yet.”

“Then, Mr. Musgrave, will you allow me to borrow fifty pounds from you this morning?” and, as he knew full well, forth immediately came the cheque book, and the demand thus made was instantly satisfied. It would have been well, perhaps, for my banker’s account, if this had always been the limit in such matters; but this was not so, for every now and then, Mas-

ter George contrived, unluckily, to get into the hands of that disagreeable city yeomanry, the Sheriff's officers, and as he was always kind enough to honour me with his confidence in these dilemmas, some considerable items became lost to my executors in this manner, for though they were nominally denominated loans, they were about as likely to be repaid, as loans borrowed by the Sultan of the Turks, from an accommodating Pasha, who may have married one of his daughters. But, however, it mattered little to me; it was just as well to fling away some of my superfluous coin, on the extravagance of a boy that I liked, as to allow it to go, nominally indeed, for the securing my place in Parliament; but, as I feared, notwithstanding all my reiterated directions to the contrary, just as often to corrupt or intimidate the votes and voices of my fellow citizens.

At length, however, after a vast deal of all this kind of proceeding, Lord George, who had still remained firm to his intention of going to the Bar, because this was the only mode by which he could prevail upon

his father to keep him in town, and pay his allowance, attained the final consummation or destruction of his hopes, just as it might prove ; being “called,” by the Society of the Middle Temple, and at length entitled to wear wig and gown. Of course he had long known the period at which the “call” would take place, and had provided chambers, and all other appurtenances, to welcome in the auspicious event, that he actually pretended to believe was to be the making of his fortune. A belief in which he was seconded by some silly people, who were foolish enough to mistake, for *bona fide* enthusiasm, the humbug of his Lordship, by the assumption of which, alone, he knew it must be, that his father could be persuaded to what he termed “shell out.”

For many a long year no man had given a more splendid dinner, among the accompaniments of being called to the Bar, than had Lord George on the occasion in question. As a great and particular favour to him, he had desired me to preside at the dinner, which was given at his chambers, and I accordingly did so, contriving, how-

ever, to get away about eleven o'clock ; as I well knew the riotous tone which the meeting would assume after that period, I did not choose to be guilty of the indecorum of having any share in that portion of the evening's amusements

Accordingly, dinner having been placed on the table about six o'clock, I at ten contrived to get away, marvelling much, in my own mind, how a certain brief, the coming of which was well known to me, had not made its appearance before I left, though its delay was no great matter, as I knew that, sooner or later, it was sure to arrive ; and in this position I thought it might safely stand.

Going home, and getting to bed as soon as I well could, I was aroused, about five o'clock in the morning, by the most extraordinary noise at my door in Park-lane ; and, pulling up the night-bolt, who should stagger into my room, but Lord George, as tipsy as it was possible for him to be and yet stand, accompanied by my trembling valet, who began to make many apologies for having been forced to give way to

the privileged intruder. Silencing these, I looked towards the main figure in the group, which was Lord George himself. It was with great difficulty he managed to speak; and, as he did so, he waved above his head an enormous bundle of something, I could scarcely say what it was, but it looked more like a heap of red rags than any thing else; and yet it made too much noise to be these.

On gazing at it again, it appeared to be paper that had been written over. At last, it occurred to me to pay some attention to what his Lordship was saying; and then I perceived that, amid a most violent storm of hiccups, he was dedicating all the powers of his mind to announcing—

“A brief!—a brief! my boy!—briefs for ever!—they are the things! The first brief, by Jove—ten-guinea brief—no less! Did not I tell you, what a start I should make among you old white-wigs in Westminster-hall? It is quite clear the attornies, one and all, are up in arms. First night of my call, a ten-guinea brief. Did that ever happen to you, old cock?—and, honour bright, no sort of interest made for it—

came of its own accord—true principle—no infernal friends making interest for a man, but the real legitimate channel—Men sought out because they can do their business better than others. That's my case, Musgrave—that's my case. A most acute and discriminating race those attornies, to find out this so soon. Ten-guinea brief—fee paid—all right—no Master Walker, but Messrs. Snooks and Hooks, or some name of that sort—never heard of them in my life before. O! how I wished you had been there, Musgrave—I was so delighted—a *bona fide* brief—all the fellows wondering to see it! Fingered it over as if they had never felt a brief before in their lives. When I told the truth, that I did not know who it came from, they swore I was the cunningest dog either in or out of Christendom; and you know it's all the same to me which—”

“But what,” said I, “have you been doing to it?” as I saw this red token of success flourishing perpetually round my hero's head, and with which I was so delighted, in one point of view, that he should

believe to be a *bona fide* brief; though, on the other, I felt that his awakening from this dream would be proportionably disagreeable. "What," said I, "have you been doing to your foolscap and tape, friend, that it looks so red?"

"Oh, my boy!" replied Lord George, with a hiccup, "doing to it? Christening it, of course."

"Christening it! What's that?"

"Ah! you lawyers are a devilish slow-coach set of fellows after all, I see, compared with us boys in the Navy. Whenever we get a commission in the King's service, the first duty of every man, of course, is, to wet it, or christen it—same thing—pour a bottle of port right over it—sit on the commission till it's dry—and, meanwhile, drink the port slap off, to the success of the jolly fellow just made."

"Well, but," said I, "you don't mean to say you did this to your brief—did you?"

Lord George said nothing, but nodded his head, when a voice from below, that I knew to be Pierrepont's, and sufficiently merry from wine too, answered—

“Yes, Mr. Musgrave, he did—three bottles of claret.”

“Bang over in the soup-tureen,” added his Lordship, taking up the burden of the song; “and we drank it off to my future pro—fess—ion—al success,” and his Lordship stammered grievously between the words, concluding at last—“but we didn’t sit upon it till we could bring it to show you. *You* can do that, if you like.”

“Thank you, my Lord,” said I; “if it’s quite the same to you, I would just as soon let it alone.”

“Oh! quite the same, Musgrave, my dear fellow, quite the same; because, you see, we thought, by the time we drove here you might like to christen it again.”

“Not particularly,” said I.

“Only one bottle of champagne,” said his Lordship, just to wash the stain of the claret off the paper. Of course, you being King’s counsel, you must stand the champagne just to drink success to my—my—pro—fess—ion—al reputation.”

“Why, thank you, my dear George, of the two I would rather sit upon the brief

than drink any thing in which it had been steeped, remembering the process it has undergone, in being copied at a law stationer's office."

Agreed! agreed!" said his Lordship, "then I'll tell you what,—Pierrepont and I will christen him afresh, and you shall assume the office of grand coroner, and sit upon the body of the defunct. Here, butler, you rascal, some burgundy in the library; if you behave well, before you have done, I'll make you as drunk as your master;" and saying this, his Lordship reeled down the stairs to christening the second, with the valet after him.

CHAPTER XVII.

“The first great cause least understood.”

ON the following day, while I was busy at chambers, a knock came to the door, and the name of Lord George Dunvext being announced, he came in, and then, quite forgetful of what had passed the previous evening, commenced a detail of that circumstance ever memorable in the annals of a junior counsel, namely, the getting his first brief.

“My dear Musgrave,” said he, “do you know last night you had scarcely left the chambers when there came some sensible client with a ten guinea brief.”

“Was it not well bathed in claret, my Lord?”

“What!” said he, “do you know that? who has told you?”

I then recounted to him the scene at my bed-room door, at which he laughed heartily, having indeed forgotten all about it; and then recurring to the same glorious theme, he added —

“It’s a great thing, isn’t it, to have gotten a brief the first day I was called? Now, you know more of the profession than I do, how could the attorneys have learned so soon that I was called to the Bar?”

“Why, my Lord, I suppose the severity of your studies may have—”

“Ah! Musgrave, you are so full of gammon always; but, all joking apart, I wonder if there will be another this evening?”

The impudence of this notion was so barefaced, that I was almost inclined to take down his vanity, by telling him the real state of the case, and through what influence the brief had been sent to him; but when I thought how soon the opportunity of his vanity being taken out of him at the Bar would arrive, in the natural course of

things, it was scarcely worth my while to be the medium of such a painful operation.

“And now,” said I, “what do you intend to do with your ‘first great cause least understood?’”*

“Bravo, Musgrave, that’s one of the best things I have heard for some time, and never was truer word uttered; for if I understand this I understand anything.”

“And pray,” said I, “what is it all about?”

“Upon my soul, I can’t tell you.”

“Well,” said I, “don’t you think you had better endeavour to learn? because, allow me to suggest to you, that a young man who, on being called to the Bar, has got his first cause, on the evening of his call, won’t be able to go down to Westminster and flash it off in the eyes of his less fortunate brethren, without attracting their narrowest scrutiny; and very much on the manner in which you get through this, your first brief, will depend the question whether you ever hold another.”

* This joke, I am told, is the property of the witty and able Mr. Horace Twiss.—PER BASIL MONTAGU, Q. C.

“Nonsense, my dear Musgrave, you do not mean that?”

“Indeed, I do; and many a man of flashy abilities, but who may, perhaps, have neglected to get himself up for the struggle, has rued that truth afterwards to his dying day. Is it an action of debt or what?”

“Upon my soul it’s a brief for which ten guineas have been paid, and beyond that, if I were to be made Lord Chancellor for knowing, I should be obliged to let the berth go by.”

“Well,” said I, “but don’t you think, that for a man who once aspired to ‘bully the Judges,’ it would be just as well if you knew, or tried to know a little about the matter. Pray, may I ask, are you leader in the case, or junior?”

“Why, Musgrave, upon my honour,—but let me see—oh! I suppose, as I had ten guineas on it, I suppose I’m leader.”

“And a nice darling, truly, you are for leader. And is that all you know about it?”

“Every fraction, and a man can only speak to the best of his knowledge, infor-

mation, and belief, as your answers in Chancery say."

"But didn't you look to see if it was endorsed 'with you, Mr. Anybody?'"

"Endorsed," said he, "why, what is the endorsement?"

"Oh! my dear fellow," said I, with a sigh, regretting in my own mind that the brief should ever have been given to him---while so little prepared to accept it; for till this moment, not even I had dreamed of his sublime ignorance, "if you will take my advice, you will contrive to be taken devilish ill when the day of trial comes, and let some friend hold your brief for you. For of all the perfect specimens of ignorance I ever met on the subject, I am sorry to say your Lordship's is the most complete."

"Oh, fiddle de dee, old Croker, that's always the way with you. I may not have studied very hard; I admit I am not what you would call one of your black letter boys. Still the case won't come on to be heard for three or four days, and I can easily get up all that is necessary to know upon it in that time."

“Can you, indeed,” said I, “why, how will you manage that; to whom will you go?”

“Go,” said his Lordship, astonished, “Where should I go? why I shall come to you, of course, and bully you into telling me all about it.”

“Which you would not retain in your noddle ten minutes, even if I could find time to tell you; but that’s impossible, so don’t count on it. I am engaged over head and ears; it was with the greatest difficulty I could find time to come and dine with you yesterday, and you have already taken up ten minutes of the time that I had appointed to give to a consultation to-day. My junior is in the next room, with the solicitor in the suit, and instead of being like you, as ignorant as a Hottentot of everything that relates to the matter in which he is going to embark his professional reputation, I shall find, when I go in, that he has carefully got up the whole case from beginning to end—knows every point in it—can direct my attention on a minute’s notice to any matter through-

out the whole of it, and lay his hand on any authority to support any single position we may find necessary to defend. I know them both well enough to take you in—you come and sit in the window, as if you were simply waiting for me; you will then see how a consultation ought to be conducted, and, unless you feel yourself competent to play the same part with your own brief a day or two hence, when you and your learned leader meet—for I can have no doubt that they have given you some leader, and most likely a distinguished one—if, I say, you should feel that you are not competent to do this, just hand your brief over to some friend at the Bar, to hold for you—don't go down to Westminster Hall to ruin yourself in the eyes of every one, for all will of course be looking on to see how the lordling does his first brief; but, let the disappointment in this case be a warning to you, that you really must work at your profession, if you intend remaining in it, and I have no doubt whatever, when you are better prepared for the ordeal, the same hand

that got you this brief will put in your way another."

On hearing this, Lord George looked very blank, and said nothing; but following me into the consultation, sat apart an attentive listener, as I advised. As the debate proceeded, I stole a glance at his countenance from time to time, and could perceive it getting, with every few moments, more and more elongated, as on his mind the conviction appeared to grow stronger—that he had embarked in a matter where foolish child's play would be insufficient, to bring him out of the scrape with anything like credit.

I saw, also, one or two looks directed towards the intruder, by the solicitor in the suit, for it was, in sooth, trespassing somewhat on such an occasion, to introduce any third party. There are some positions, however, which render liberties, if not pardonable, at least, unnoticeable—mine was one of them, and as I took no notice whatever of his lordship's presence, it was impossible for any one to say whether he was secretary, friend, or any thing else. The

consultation having lasted its due twenty minutes, a period which, unless it was something very heavy, I rarely permitted a consultation to exceed—I rose to bring it to an end, for, if these things are managed with regularity, and a senior will hear all parties, without interruption; before he speaks himself, a consultation of twenty minutes is more effectual than one of an hour and a half indiscreetly confused; and the only object of a consultation, after all, is to enable the leader to have a perfect view of his case, and communicate as much as need be to his juniors.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"But wot you what? the youth was going
To make an end of all his wooing!"

SIR JOHN SUCKLING.

When the parties were all gone, I hurried round to Lord George, and asked him how long he thought it would take him to get up his brief, in such a manner that he could give to his leader as good an account of it, as mine had just rendered to me.

"First of all,—tell me, Musgrave, what, pray, is the use of puzzling that poor wretch, who has just gone away, with a thousand and one points connected with the matter?"

"For this reason, Master George, a good general is not content with learning the art of war himself, but he further takes care to ascertain what degree of knowledge is pos-

sessed by his lieutenants, in order that, when the day of battle comes, he may guess which is the post that can safely be entrusted to each,—so at the Bar; by knowing what stuff my juniors are made of, if I happen to be in another court when my case is called on, I can decide immediately whether the junior I have with me, in that case, is competent to fight on in my place, till I come; or whether I must, of necessity, have the battle postponed until I can appear myself. Then, too, it is of the utmost utility to know whether you can rely on your fellow-struggler for arguing the points of law; or, if at your own Bar, whether he is a certain hand for crushing the truth out of a witness. But surely, after what you have seen, you will not think of retaining your brief, and working it yourself?”

“Why, Musgrave, upon my honour, I do not know. I have been thinking that if I go to Pierrepont, and get myself well up in the matter, I shall be able to get on very well.”

“Well, as you like; of course no man is expected to hold the first brief at starting-

without making a few blunders in the execution of so difficult a part."

"I do not see the necessity of that, Musgrave."

"Oh, well," said I, "I am glad you do not; I hope you never will. But for one thing, to say no more, in general, a man feels so excessively nervous at the novel and trying situation of hearing the court filled with his own voice,—his courage wholly deserts him; and I have even seen a case in which the junior, after the few first words, has been unable to utter three sentences, and obliged to sit down in despair."

"What?" said his Lordship; "and do you mean that he had to give up the case?"

"Yes," said I; "abandon it altogether; and not only that, but was exceedingly glad to make his way out of court afterwards."

"Oh, my dear Musgrave, such a man as that must be a regular fool. I cannot even see what there is to try the courage in a few patches of horse-hair, covered with powder, and a long black gown, with a small portion of rabble looking on. Pooh! pooh! whatever may happen, depend upon it, you

will not see my nerves at all affected; while a man has a comfortable oak bench under his lee, he may take as much time as he pleases, and no danger threatening him that any mortal can discover.—No, no, the idea of losing one's nerves is absurd to a man accustomed to lay out and reef the mizentopsail of a seventy-four, in so many seconds, in the eyes of the whole fleet, the wind blowing all the while great guns, where, with one false step, there is scarcely time to utter any cry, that human ingenuity can devise, before you are hurried off, smashed into all sorts of particles and so forth on the deck below, or diving down, an involuntary pearl fisher, some fifty fathoms deep in those tides so 'darkly, deeply, beautifully blue.' No, no, Musgrave, my boy, never fear my losing my nerve, if no other calamity happens to me I shall be all right; besides, I suppose I shall have nothing or little to do, because the leader takes every thing on himself."

"Why yes, that's true to a certain extent; but still it will now and then happen that the junior is called on to figure away

in the leader's place when he least expects it, and then, if not prepared, he is regularly ruined, or something little better."

"Well, if that's the case, then I'll be prepared, leader or no leader, so I'll be off to Pierrepont and get him to grind me up most especially particularly sharp."

"Very well," said I, "if you are resolved for it, 'a wilful man must have his way,' as the Scotch bodies say: now take care of yourself, and by and bye come and breakfast with me on the morning of the trial, and, if I can spare the time, I will go with you into Court, to see how you get on with that which, I cannot help reminding you, is about the severest ordeal by which a man's pluck can be tested."

"Oh! never fear that, Musgrave, my boy; I've pluck enough for any thing."

"Remember, don't 'bully the Judges,' that's all!"

"Oh! confound that story; that wicked fellow, Pierrepont, has been and told that joke against me all over Westminster Hall, for, whenever I show myself there, the first question that's asked of me is, 'Oh! my

Lord, are you come down to ‘bully the Judges,’ this morning?”

“Oh! you have been asked that, have you?”

“Yes, fifty times at least.”

“Well, let that be a caution to you, to think before you speak, and remember that when a man makes a false step, in such a profession as the Bar, there are a thousand lookers-on, fully interested in remembering it.”

“Oh! they be *hanged*,” said his Lordship, “my only objection to repeating that joke against me, about ‘bullying the Judges,’ is, lest it should come to the ears of the old boys themselves.”

“If that’s all that frets you,” said I, “don’t trouble yourself. If the joke has gone into Westminster Hall, it has got to their ears long ago—and no doubt they have all had a hearty laugh at it, as the speech of a boy talking of a matter on which he was ignorant.”

“Pleasant,” said his Lordship, “to have one’s ignorance made the theme of amusement to one’s contemporaries.”

“Then my dear fellow, you should be alive to guard against it, by taking care that study and information should annihilate that ignorance, and so secure you against the recurrence of such an evil.”

“‘*Ahora bien!* it is mighty fine, said the priest,’ but do you know, Master Musgrave, that studying knowledge and information, and that sort of thing, is a very anti-aristocratic sort of affair.”

“Yes, I know that perfectly well, Lord George; and so I took leave to tell you when the knowledge would have been of some little use—namely, before you ventured among us.”

“Well, well, no more lectures now, if you please. I’m off, and sadly puzzled—I feel, whether to start and be ground up at once by Pierrepont, or be off and look out for a charming little creature, who—by the bye, you remember, that darling little thing that nearly ran over me in Albemarle-street?”

“Yes,” said I, “I perfectly remember the fact, some years since.”

“Exactly! and ever since that time I

have been trying to get an opportunity of being introduced to her—but I can't even find out who she is. Now she appears here—then there—then at the other place, with long—dreadfully long—intervals of time between her appearances. No end of fortunes have I spent in cab hire, in driving furiously after her carriage, and so on; but some *contre temps* always occurs, to keep me as much in the dark as ever. Her britschka vanishes sharp round a dark corner, or my cab goes crash up against a lamp-post, or first-floor window, or some confounded accident or another. But this is the hour I observe, at which her carriage always drives out of Bond Street for the Parks. I have five sweepers in pay, at this moment, to find out where it comes from—a perfect society for the diffusion of useful knowledge in themselves. But then you say ‘I ought to go and be ground by Pierrepont.’ Which had I better do, look for the angel, or go to the lawyer?”

“Upon my word,” said I, “in such a delicate case, you must decide for yourself.”

“Well, then, I think Pierrepont is al-

ways to be found, and this woman never to be found; so I'd better look to the woman first.—Ah! there you go, frowning as usual.—Well, then, come, I'll give them both a fair toss up," and, ringing the bell, the clerk came.

"Clerk, can you lend me a brown," said his Lordship. "Don't you know what I mean? A brown—that is a halfpenny."

The halfpenny was produced—his Lordship very gravely spun it in the air, previously observing—

"Now, the head shall be for old Pierrepont, and the woman for my adorable unknown."

Presently the coin fell on my desk, the figure of Britannia uppermost.

"There she is," cried his Lordship, in delight, stooping over to see the result. "Dear, delightful angel! Now, my dear Musgrave, old Pierrepont, you see, will do just as well cold; in other words, he'll keep till to-morrow. By the way, if I remember right, isn't there some old governor mentioned in Cornélius Nepos, who always says—'Business to-night, and pleasure to-

morrow?' That's the man for my money—there's classical authority for you. Confess, now, you didn't expect anything so learned from me—did you? By—bye, my boy! Don't hurt your health, you know, with your practice; and, if a difficult point should arrive that you can't master, my dear Musgrave, you know my address—never in chambers, and always from home. But, still, don't let that deter you; and so, *au revoir*." And, in an instant more, this flighty being, whose very thoughtlessness seemed to be an agreeable relief to my sterner mood, vanished from the room, and I heard him depart down stairs, chanting the following sentimental ballad:—

" But d—— their eyes, if ever they tries,
To rob a poor man of his beer."

A choice *morçeau*, which I happened to know he^d was taught, at the hour of three o'clock on a Sunday morning, by the most noble nephew of an archbishop.

CHAPTER XIX.

“Give me a look! give me a face!”

BEN JONSON.

At length the day of trial came. Lord George entered my room, at an early hour before breakfast, in considerable glee, exclaiming—

“Come, Nuncky, the day of trial’s come, and here I am, as cool as a cucumber! I do confess, one feels a little excited, its true; but I like that delightful titillation about the heart. And, in fact, it has induced me to compose an entirely new ballad, set to original music—most original! Shall I give you a stave of it, just to help you on while shaving?”

I nodded my head, in token of acqui-

escence; and his Lordship immediately commenced—

THE MAIDEN BRIEF.

A NEW LAW BALLAD.

“ Heart, be still,
And fear no ill,
Nor judge nor jury have power to kill,
But seek relief
From all your grief,
In the foolscap phiz of your maiden brief.

“ Sir, speak out,”

“ My Lord, I doubt,”

“ Poor blood! he scarcely knows what he’s about!”
Thus whispers and mutters each jealous thief,
Who hears me do my maiden brief.

“ My Lord, this case,”—

“ —This is not the right place,”—

“ —Is brought by the plaintiff, who ran a race.”

“ Well, d—— it, that’s cool,”

“ This fellow’s no fool ! ”

“ Lord George Dunvext, you may take your rule.”

“ Thus ends my doubt, and fear and grief,”

With a joy that mocks at all belief,

And a stately bow, I hand back my brief:

To the wonder of those,

Who fill the first rows.

What’s made so many drops crowd on my nose?

At doing this maiden brief!”

Having complimented his Lordship very warmly on the elegance of his new ballad, we descended to the breakfast table, when he told me of a little adventure that had

that day befallen him. But, as it was afterwards a matter of laughter, I will here insert it,—not with all the parenthetical breaks with which he garnished the story, but in a simple and consecutive form.

It appears, that on the evening before, the Marquis had given a grand ball at his Villa, at Richmond, to which Lord George had gone, and giving orders to be called at four o'clock, for it was in the beginning of June, his horse was brought to the door, and he started for London; resolved, to use his own language, on “bracing his nerves well up, past the possibility of any failure, by a cool, delicious ride.”

Having the *entré* of the Richmond Park, he rode directly through from gate to gate, and in the beautiful and quiet lanes of Roehampton, just as he was approaching one of those gates of which no man wishes to have too many to open in riding, he beheld a gentleman before him, mounted on a very beautiful pony, and opening the gate through which they both had to pass.

Quickening his pace, Lord George was soon at the side of the stranger, for, as the

latter heard the footfall of another steed approaching, he, with equal good nature, breeding, and taste, waited until the new comer could take advantage of his having opened the gate, which he held apart in his hand. There was something in the pleasing physiognomy of the stranger, who, though not very large of build, bore on his countenance all the appearance of sharpness of intellect, and great good humour;—a most inimitable combination of qualities—there was something, I say, in the stranger's countenance, that at once attracted Lord George's regards, and lifting his hat from his head, young Thoughtless thus returned the courtesy of the other, expressing also his thanks in words.

There are moments in riding, when a man dislikes exceedingly to be interrupted, but there are also times, when the goodly humour and fellowship inspired by the noble exercise, makes one long exceedingly for the fellowship of a conversable animal, to whom to impart a share of that delight that thrills within one. Perhaps some feeling of this sort it was, that induced the

stranger at once to enter into conversation with Lord George ; and, perhaps, there is no opportunity of breaking into conversation with a stranger, so good, as that of finding him under some trifling debt to your courtesy ; besides, in this case, the first remark of the stranger was perfectly true.

Lord George, considering himself bound on no every day matter, had mounted himself on his favourite horse, a small entire Arabian, which he had himself purchased at Muscat, and brought over across the seas, in John—Company's ship,—when he returned to England, on the last occasion of his taking French leave from his Majesty's Navy, in the Indian Archipelago ; for, throughout life, he had always shewn the most cool contempt of any obstacles, either of discipline, or anything else, and seemed to consider no pleasure on earth half so great, as that of following his own despotic will at any cost.

From such a character, it would of course be inseparable, that he should be for ever in a scrape ; but he seemed to rely with

the most entire confidence upon his aristocratical position, for always extricating him from whatever might be the difficulty.

“That’s a noble animal on which you are mounted,” said the stranger.

“Yes, it is, indeed,” said Lord George, still determined to have his fun. “It is one that the Imaum of Muscat would insist on forcing upon me, the morning I sailed for England, though I was grieved, absolutely, to take such a fine creature out of his stables.”

The strange gentleman opened his eyes somewhat widely at this declaration, and Lord George seemed to think that he frowned on him rather fiercely, as if he thought Lord George was, what in cant phrase is termed “guying” him. His Lordship also observed, that his new acquaintance spoke with a peculiar accent, which at first, almost made him doubt, whether he was not lately arrived from some residence abroad, or that he had been very much in the habit of speaking foreign languages. However, as his Lordship soon had the best of the conversation to himself,

and the other one seemed quite amused and contented that it should be so, this peculiarity of speech vanished from his attention, for a very sufficient reason, namely,—that he scarcely allowed to the good natured stranger any opportunity of showing it.

“The Imaum of Muscat!” said the gentleman, “is he a friend of yours?”

“Oh! most intimate!” said the unabashed Lord George. “My health is very weak, and Muscat very warm: my sufferings are entirely from the lungs, and whenever I get into a little consumption, which I do occasionally, I just run out to Muscat, stay a few months with the Imaum, and come back as hale and hearty as a nigger;” here his Lordship perceived his new acquaintance staring at him and exhibiting divers expressions of surprise, but this, only, the more delighted the noble Lord, and away he launched out into further nonsense of the same rhodomontading description.

His companion, however, who was much too sharp a person to be easily deceived, immediately saw the kind of character on

which he had stumbled, and, I suppose, having no better amusement for the road, determined to draw him out—His Lordship no ways unwilling to make mirth for the Philistines, nor caring in the least whether the laugh went for or against him. Thus they went on, discussing one subject after another, until, just as they approached the green lane at Roehampton, leading on to the Richmond road, his Lordship, looking back at the village of villas they had just left, exclaimed—

“A very pretty spot that Roehampton is, I have often thought I should like to live there.”

“It is, Sir—it is, Sir, a very pretty place indeed,” said the stranger, who seemed perfectly to agree with Lord George in his feelings for the place.

“By the way,” said his Lordship, “I see in the papers that, among other folks who have gone to live at Roehampton, there’s the Judge, little Johnny Witticman.”

“Indeed, Sir,” said the other, who seemed to take unusual interest in this announcement—and then added, “Pray, Sir, as you

seem to know so many distinguished people, is the Judge, too, an acquaintance of your's?"

"Of mine?" repeated Lord George musingly, as though he was thinking of some other subject, "Oh! no—not at all!" and then, as if the thought struck him that it was a pity to lose a single opportunity of mystifying a strange acquaintance, who, in truth, had somewhat piqued his Lordship's vanity by mystifying himself; for, in spite of all the hints his Lordship gave, he could not extract a single word from the stranger of his whereabouts—"Know him! know who?" inquired his Lordship, as if awaking from an absent reverie.

"Mr. Justice Wittiman, Sir; you were saying that he had come to reside for the season in a villa at Roehampton. I say, do you know the Judge in private life?"

"I should think I did, indeed," said the audacious Lord George, one of the most intimate friends I have."

"Is he, indeed, Sir?" said the other, who seemed still more surprised at this declaration, and at every additional token of his

companion's wonder, Lord George's inclination for the marvellous seemed to increase.

"Indeed, Sir!" continued the stranger; "and so you know the Judge. Pray, Sir, may I ask what sort of a looking personage he is?"

"Oh!" said his Lordship, "he's a jolly little fellow; but if you would like to have a distinct notion of what he's like, I can take him off for you, to a nicety."

"Thank you, thank you," said the other, scarcely seeming to know whether he should say yes or no; and his surprise evidently at this juncture still greater than ever."

"Don't you know the Judge?" demanded Lord George, abruptly, to the other, who appeared confused by the question, though his Lordship did not notice it; and, after hesitating for some seconds, the 'stranger replied—

"Why, that is, perhaps—not exactly; but I have seen his Lordship."

"Well, but have you ever heard him speak?"

"'Hem—ha—yes—I have heard him speak—I have heard him speak, certainly."

“ Well, then,” said Lord George, “ you must know, as well as I do, that he has a most peculiar intonation.”

“ Has he, Sir, indeed ?” said the stranger, once more exhibiting unequivocal marks of surprise.

“ Has he ?” repeated Lord George ;— “ why, my dear fellow, you could never have paid much attention to what he has said to you, or you not only could not have failed to perceive that he has a most peculiar intonation, as I said before, but such a peculiarity, that, once recognized, you can never again mistake him.”

Here, if Lord George had been on the alert, he would have seen his auditor’s face light up into a smile of most peculiar meaning. But the fact was, his Lordship was so wholly engrossed with his own amusement at the time, that the apparently subordinate point, of examining the stranger minutely, quite escaped him. So, when he heard his companion say, or admit rather, that he had heard the Judge speak, Lord George added—

“ I am sure, when I take him off, you

will be able to recognize his Lordship's voice and manner in a moment. Now, just listen to me."

And, accordingly, listen to his Lordship the stranger did; and, perhaps, never man possessed an auditor more completely wrapped in listening to a speaker's discourse, than on that memorable morning did that strange rider appear to be engrossed, by the imitative companion beside him. And here, we may premise, that Lord George had never in his life seen the party he was going to imitate—a cool piece of audacity certainly, but quite in keeping with the man, who seemed to view life, and all that belonged to it, as a mere farce, got up for his special amusement; and it was just as vain to quarrel with him as to chide—his maxim being, that no one could do more than shoot him—and that was a trifle. Such a being, therefore, one was obliged to suffer as a "chartered libertine"—to use that word in a harmless sense—which he really took care to be—ever ready to do a kindness, but utterly unable to refrain from a joke.

CHAPTER XX.

“ 'Tis Massaroni himself that now sings.”

GENTLE ZITELLA.

Now, it so happened that Pierrepont had, introduced Lord George Dunvext to one of those members at the Bar—of whom there are an abundance—who, among all their other accomplishments and powers of mind, enjoy to a great extent the faculty of imitation, without which, indeed, in some degree, it might be difficult to succeed at the Nisi Prius Bar at all. However, from time immemorial, every circuit has possessed a number of men who, having a good deal of idle time in court, have necessarily been forced to listen so often to the more prominent actors in the scene, that, like the German bullfinches, that are, on the same prin-

ciple, taught to pipe particular airs—these imitators seem unable to restrain that faculty to which we have alluded, and at last become perfect masters of every tone, gesture; and peculiarity of every judge, and counsel on their circuit.

Not that any imitation of this sort is indulged with the slightest intention of perpetrating anything personal or rude, but simply as a clever matter of art, to which even those taken off, rarely, for a moment, think of raising any objection; because, as they themselves, judges and all, have done the same thing in their own day—taking off those above them, so, when their own turn arrives, with great good taste, they learn to smile at that which is, after all, only one of the accompaniments of their distinguished position, which, by bringing them more prominently forward than the rest of mankind, makes, as a matter of course, their peculiarities more noticed.

Now, of Wittiemán, a great many of these droll stories had, at different times, been coined and made; for, while one-half of the current jokes respecting any man are true,

the rest are utterly fabulous. Still, of Wittiemán, we say, a more than ordinary number of these jokes were in existence; because he had always been eminent, throughout his career, not only as a most clever master of retort, but as a very original sayer of good things: And, no doubt, a kind and gentlemanly demeanour, which always distinguished him in the exercise of his high office, thus made him a great favourite at the Bar, and led to the association of his style and manner, with feelings of good fellowship and regard.

Well, one of these imitators of his Lordship had, at some Bar dinner of young men, been requested to, what is called, “give Johnny Wittiemán,” and he then proceeded to comply with the request, so faithfully—gave every tone, and look, and gesture of his lordship, with such fidelity, that no one then present, and possessing the power of imitation, could be at any loss afterwards to represent his lordship at second hand, quite as truly as if the sketch had been taken from personal observation.

This, then, was the case of Lord George; he possessed the organ in question to a great

extent, and no sooner heard his lordship given with immense applause, and in the faithful manner that we have stated, than he immediately resolved to get up that particular case himself, and soon most entirely succeeded. With regard to the story, on which the getting up is founded, it is only fair to say, that many doubts have always existed as to its perfect genuineness; the man who first gave it, declared, of course, that he himself had heard it. But, then, with all the love of an artist, he was known to be so fond of colouring his sketches,—of warming them up to the very last touch of life,—that no man could ever guess what liberties he might have taken with his original in the present instance. Be that as it may, however, his lordship who thought the story far too good to be stript of a single particular, gave it with all the minutiae of the original hand from whence he had it.

“Now,” said Lord George, “I must, first of all, tell you that Johnny Wittiemán is, I believe, a Welshman, and he lays a strong and most peculiar emphasis upon words which do not appear to any one else

to require any emphasis at all, and when he gets warm with his subject, which he always does when he is addressing a jury, he has the habit of most extensively elevating his eye-brows, and then again collapsing them immediately into a most terrific frown. This causes his lips to assume a very peculiar expression, a sort of pouting, as it were, of which, though his lordship is wholly unconscious, still it gives to his address a most singular effect."

"Indeed, Sir," said the stranger, frowning somewhat savagely on Lord George, and, in truth, if his Lordship had not been so engrossed as he was, and could only have looked up at his auditor while he proceeded to tell this story, he would have seen on that auditor's countenance a most extraordinary, if not alarming, resemblance to the very expression he was endeavouring to pourtray, as the stranger now rose in his stirrups and fixed the most intense gaze on the imitator, then elevated his eye-brows under his hat, and then depressed them into a determined frown, drawing his head back with a sudden emotion, as if he took the very liveliest in-

terest in the tale he was hearing, or could not help mimicking the action pourtrayed. All this, however, Lord George entirely lost. He was looking straight a-head, while he described his Lordship, and only thinking of the great original in the distance, quite forgot to inspect the worthy gentleman on his off saddle-bow.

“And now,” continued his Lordship, “I must also tell you, that among the peculiarities of Johnny——”

“Johnny!” replied the other, in a start, as if in a voice not intended for Lord George to hear.

“Yes, Johnny,” said his Lordship; “for you must know he is a great favourite with us at the Bar.”

“Have you been long at the Bar, Sir?” enquired the stranger, looking at him from under his eye-brows.

“Ages,” replied his Lordship, not choosing to be pumped; “I have a very considerable lead on the Home Circuit.”

“Indeed, Sir!!” said the stranger, with a look that spoke his great bewilderment.

“But, however, never mind that, that is

nothing," continued his Lordship—"now to our story."

"Well, Sir!" said the stranger.

"Well!" said Lord George, "and there is another point, also, that particularly distinguishes Johnny."

"Johnny!" again repeated the other, with a frown; but this time his Lordship took no notice of the repetition, and went on.

"Whether it is from his being a native of Wales, where his father was a clergyman of good family, or whether it is from having been much used to continental languages, as I said before, I do not know, but Johnny has got a peculiar habit of not sufficiently using the nasal organs in speaking, and that gives a very foreign pronunciation to his words; he also wears a double gold eye-glass, which he puts to his eye constantly to read his notes, and to assist him in other parts of his judicial duty; but this he never does, as most men do, holding the gold as a mere light trifle scarcely to be felt, but always applying it with a degree of gravity and force, which convey to the spectator a notion that the eye-glass in question is quite

as heavy as a crow bar at least, and this also has a very peculiar effect. Now for his duties as a judge—in all the serious and important parts, and responsibilities of his high office, it is impossible for any one to discharge them with greater pains, more exceeding patience, or more gentlemanly demeanour; and this it is, with all well-thinking people, whose praise is desirable, that makes him so popular. A prisoner tried before him is sure of every chance the constitution of his country intends he should have; any cause that he hears is certain of obtaining the most patient investigation that the abilities of its counsel, or its own merits can procure for it; and altogether it is impossible that any one can labour more assiduously, or more conscientiously to discharge the heavy duties that fall to the lot of an English Judge. But, in trying his cases, there is also frequently visible, in his method of conducting them, another quality—great natural quickness, which inclines to search in every nook and corner for any fact that may throw light on the case, and this, to parties who cannot define what

his motive may be, as they cannot, of course, see into his mind, causes him frequently to examine minutely a collateral subject, the object of which is not very clear to the bystander. Now, in a case that I am going to mention to you, a witness had been called, of the name of Dundas, and it suggested itself to his Lordship's mind that it was worth enquiring whether he belonged to the Melville tribe of Dundas' or not."

"Well, Sir!" said the stranger, all attention.

"Well!" continued Lord George, "as soon as the name of the witness was called—Mr. Dundas—his Lordship elevated his eye-brows, and then frowned; then elevated his eye-brows again, then, at length, lifting his crow-bar glass, in the manner I have told you," and here Lord George took his eyeglass to carry out the imitation, when the stranger very knowingly stepped a little astern, so that he could not be seen, drew out a pair of his own, and lifting them exactly in the way Lord George was describing—just as if he, too, was mimicking his Lordship—gave a sly peep, at intervals, at

the imitator, and as he beheld Lord George's face presenting the drollest imitation of the Judge's, started back suddenly, as if from surprise, frowned very fiercely for a moment, and then burst into a hearty laugh. Still, all this extraordinary conduct, on the part of his listener, escaped the attention of the careless Dunvext, and on he went.

“As soon as Johnny had taken this observation of the witness, he turned round to Serjeant Lightwit, who was counsel for the plaintiff, and beckoning him up towards the bench, so as to be out of hearing of the witness, said in a low voice,—

“ ‘Brother Lightwit, can you tell me whether the witness, Mr. Dundas, is any relation of *my* Lord *Mel-ville*, or whether he is *not*?’

“ ‘No, indeed, my Lord,’ said the Serjeant, giving a couple of those slight coughs with which he always opened every sentence, and, surely, never was cough turned to so useful a purpose, as by that clever and sarcastic veteran, at the same time swinging backwards and forwards with his right hand, his black tortoise-shell glass, in counter-dis-

inction to his Lordship's gold one: While with his left hand he held his gown behind his back"—and here Lord George began to imitate the learned Sergeant, whom, no more than the learned Judge, Lord George had ever seen. At this, the stranger who seemed at once to recognise the portrait of the Sergeant, cried out —

“Capital! capital!”

“‘No, my Lord, I really cannot tell whether he is a relation of Lord *Melville* or not; I wish I could inform your Lordship.’

“‘Oh! very well, very well,’ said Johnny, bowing to Serjeant Lightwit, and then beckoning to the leading Counsel for the defendant—the astute and clever King’s Counsel, Mr. Mind, one of the ablest lawyers of his day. Mind, who always wore a pair of gold spectacles, and bore a most composed and almost saturnine countenance, compared with the laughing expression of Lightwit—here gravely inclined his head towards his Lordship, while he continued to hold his hands in his breeches pocket.

“‘Mr. Mind,’ said Johnny, ‘can you inform me whether this witness, Mr. Dun-

das, is any relation of *my* Lord *Mel-ville*, or whether-he-is-not ?”

“On hearing this question, Mind drew out very reluctantly his right hand from its snug receptacle, and pushing back the right hand corner of his gold spectacles, his constant exordium to all communications, gravely answered with as much solidity as if it involved the ruin of his client,

“ ‘Why, my Lord, I really cannot!!’

“Johnny nodded to Mind, and once more lifted his glass to inspect the witness. Mind bowed to his Lordship, and returned to his post at the Bar table—for the case happened on circuit—and after his Lordship had taken inspection the second of the witness Dundas, he said, as if to himself, with the usual elevation of the eyebrows—

“ ‘It really is *most* extraordinary!’ but what it was that was *most* extraordinary no person in Court at that moment, except the Judge could make out. Both Lightwit and Mind were exceedingly puzzled—each thought that this ‘*most* extraordinary’ matter might be something to lose him his verdict, and both were on the look out to

avoid such a calamity if possible. Meanwhile his Lordship made a note, and then looking up and seeing that the cause was at a stand still, he said to the counsel for the plaintiff, who was examining his witness—

“ ‘Go on, brother Lightwit, go on.’ ”

“ ‘I beg your pardon, my Lord, we were waiting for you,’ said Lightwit, with two more coughs, and on the cause proceeded; the witnesses were examined, cross-examined, re-examined, and dismissed; the plaintiff’s case was closed, and the defendant heard in reply; and, as he called no witnesses, his Lordship then proceeded to sum up. ’

“ ‘Now, whenever his Lordship sums up to a jury, I must inform you——’ ”

“ ‘Thank you, Sir,’ said the stranger, seeming infinitely amused.

“ ‘That he always turns round to the side where the jury is, shifting his note-book round also—lays his left hand on its open page—weighs backward and forward this terrible eye-glass of his, giving it, every now and then, a most terrific and laborious lift, until it has actually accomplished an alti-

tude equal to that of the bridge of his nose, on which, with evident signs of relief from labour, he lets the golden bar fall—all the while, I must add, frightening the jurors to their very hearts' cores, by some terrific frowns, and always pronouncing the *y* in jury soft—thus, *ju-ree*. For some minutes, his summing up in the present case went on much as usual; at length, however, he made a pause, lifted his eye-glass, and then, with a dreadful frown, proceeded:—‘And now, gentlemen *of* the ju-ry, much will depend upon the degree of credit which you *shall* attach *to* the next witness, Mr. Dundas. And here I may mention it to you, as a *most* extraordinary thing, that, though I asked *both* the counsel *for* the plaintiff, and the counsel *for* the defendant, neither of those learned gentleman could tell me *whether* this Mr. Dundas was-or-was-not *any* relation of *my* Lord Mel-ville! But, gentlemen *of* the ju-ry, whether the witness, Mr. Dundas, was a relation of *my* Lord Mel-ville; or, gentlemen *of* the ju-ry, *whether* he was *not*, that is a question, gentlemen *of* the ju-ry, with which you have nothing whatever to do!’”

The burst of laughter that here followed from the stranger was loud and hearty, and in it Lord George did not disdain to take a very sufficient share himself. After it was over, the stranger said to his Lordship,—

“But, surely you do not mean seriously to affirm, that this caricature of the learned Judge has any thing in it at all like his Lordship?”

“Hasn’t it!” said Lord George, “you come along with me, my Cock, to Westminster Hall, to day; I am going there to do a case before Johnny, and you may then judge for yourself, whether or not it isn’t like him.”

“You going to do a case before him, to-day?” replied the stranger; while over his countenance there appeared to steal a sort of pleasant smile at this announcement, the reason of which was not very perceptible.

“Yes,” said Lord George, “*I am* going to do a case; of course, I constantly do cases before him.”

“And pray, Sir, may I ask, will you lead this morning, or are you junior in any case? They call it junior, don’t they? of course, I don’t pretend to know anything

about the practice of courts of law, but one now and then hears terms made use of."

"Why, yes, you are right there," replied Lord George, "that is the term, but whether I shall lead to-day, or not, I have not quite made up my mind; I believe there is a leader with me, and if I should feel too much fatigue to go on with the case myself, of course, I shall send for him; but, if not, you know—why, perhaps I may take the amusement of doing the case myself."

"Indeed, Sir! Is that the way counsel generally arrange these matters between them?"

"Why," said his Lordship, "I won't answer for others, but it's the way I always arrange these matters myself."

"Very convenient, and as Mr. Justice Wittiman is such an intimate friend of yours, I have no doubt he will be quite delighted to see you before him this morning. Where, may I ask, does the Court sit, Sir,—at Guildhall?"

"No, man—" and his Lordship here corrected the querist with all the air of su-

perior information. “Don’t you know it’s Term Time?”

“Indeed Sir!” said the stranger.

“To be sure it is,” continued his Lordship, “and it’s Johnny’s turn, this Term, to sit in the Bail Court;—that is where my case will come on.” And, in proportion to the want of information, and humility disclosed by the stranger, increased the condescension and magnificence of my Lord.

“And pray, Sir, may I ask,” now demanded the other, “what is the name of your case?”

“Doe, on the demise of Higgins, against Jackson.”

“Dear me!” said the stranger, “that is a very curious name for a suit, is it not?”

“Why, yes; it is one of the barbarous remnants of our old fictitious style of law, and is the way in which ejectments are entitled.”

“Indeed, Sir! and, pray, may I ask what is the meaning of an ejectment?—I have often heard the term used. Could you explain to me the various relations of the parties to the action?”

“Why, a-hem—ha—as to that,” and his Lordship, amidst no slight confusion, hemmed and ha’d several times, and at last said, “Why, as to that, it’s a long rigmarole about ‘the lessor of the plaintiff,’ the ‘casual ejector,’ and so on. You would not understand it, even if I were to explain it to you.”

“Why, yes, Sir,” said the stranger, with a significant smile, “I think I might manage to do that, if you would be kind enough to take the trouble.”

“Oh! no; it is impossible you could do that,” replied his Lordship; “it’s quite out of the question;—no non-legal mind, I am sure, could understand any thing so obscure and complicated.”

“And, pray, Sir, about what number in the list is your cause?”

“Oh, faith, I do not know, but it will be on about twelve o’clock.”

“Well,” said the stranger, “I did think of turning into Westminster Hall to-day; if I be near the Bail Court at that hour, I shall have great curiosity to hear you do your case.”

“Do, do, by all means.”

“Well, but,” said the stranger, “if I should come into the court, I am afraid that when once you have got your wig and gown on, you will not condescend to know me ; you counsellors are so barricadoed in court, it’s difficult to get a word with you.”

“Why,” condescendingly, replied, Lord George, “you know we are obliged to use a little circumspection, or it would never do for a man who has as much business on his hands as he can possibly attend to of his own, if every idle acquaintance he has ever met with in his life were to feel himself justified in coming forward, and so distracting his attention, and taking up his time. Still, where people have some modesty, and a little consideration for us, we never object to render them any attention in our power ; and so, if you should be in court when the case comes on, and cannot get a seat to hear it, if you will send the usher to me, I will tell him to get you into one of the back rows.”

“Thank you,” said the stranger, smiling, “I’m sure it’s an offer exceedingly kind of you, and one which, I assure you, I shall never forget. Good morning.”

“ Good morning,” carelessly replied Lord George, without even turning round to look at the acquaintance who was bidding him adieu, until after they had parted, when his Lordship heard the stranger burst into a hearty laugh a little way behind him, and he then turned round, and observed that his late companion entered the Roehampton-road, from which they had previously emerged together.

“ What ! is he a Roehampton bird, too ? ” muttered his Lordship to himself. “ That imitation of little Johnny seems to have tickled his fancy amazingly,” as every now and then he caught the sound of laughter, borne on the stillness of the yet young morning, across those pleasant fields and blooming hedgerows.

CHAPTER XXI.

“One blushing shame, another white despair.”

SHAKESPEARE.

THE interview just past excited little attention in the mind of our volatile friend, who, busy with conning over the all-important case of “Doe on the demise of Higgins,” thought he had nicely gammoned some raw out-dweller of the city—he cared not who he might be—and amused himself greatly at what he mentally termed—“the wild man’s ignorance ;” and, shortly afterwards, putting spurs to his horse’s sides, he arrived in Park-lane at about a quarter to seven o’clock, and, among other gossip at breakfast, recounted to me, as a capital joke,

his assumption to the country bumpkin of the great law leader.

I said to him at the time—"In all probability, George, that man that you think you have crammed in this egregious way, must have had at the time some means of knowing that you were not dealing in the strictest facts, and has either set you down for one of the swell-mob, returning from an effort to pick up something from your father's guests—or, what is just as probable, a gasconading clerk, fool enough to pretend to the character of his master. You'll make some terrific blunder some day, and have the laugh quite against you, if you continue these fits of rhodomontading, for which you have such a fancy."

"Laugh, my boy! To be sure they may laugh all day, and night too, if they like; any man may laugh at me, if he can only find an opportunity. So now, give me another cup of coffee, and tell me what that was you were saying yesterday about my going to Keenhand, and asking him what line of defence he intends to adopt in this ejection. Confound the ejection; it's

a great deal of bother. What a pestilent thing it is, that no one will invent a royal road to learning!"

"That's true; but, even if you had it, you wouldn't be better off; for the learning, in which all could equal you, would be very little prized by folks of your stamp, who worship knowledge, not for herself, but simply for the gold fringe with which her robes are trimmed."

"Ah! you are always so very poetical, Musgrave; it's a thousand pities you ever went to the Equity Bar. You would have made a perfect ensnarer of juries."

"Well, my Lord," said I, "I only hope that, to-day, I may be able to bring the same reproach against you."

"Oh! no, I hope not; for, to tell you the truth, as the hour comes on, I've no great fancy for addressing those twelve grave-looking dogs, shut up in so many feet of wainscot, and looking as imperturbable as if the devil himself couldn't turn them."

"Ah! ah! my Lord, then," said I, "is it true, that, in spite of all your talking,

you find yourself as mortal as all the rest of mankind. The other day, I understood you to say, that one who had looked on death, when reefing a mizen-topsail, &c. &c., 'could find nothing to funk at in the simple conduct of a mere civil cause, before a judge and jury.'

"Why, yes; and so I say now, but still——"

"Ah! well, come, come, we shall see how you get through this when the moment comes. However, as the carriage is at the door, pop your hat on, and away we'll bundle---a very few hours more will decide the fate of both you and your cause. So, now come on.

"The air is hatefully oppressive," said Lord George, hastily lowering the two windows of the chariot nearest himself, as we drove rapidly from the door in Park-lane towards Westminster Hall.

My only answer was a quiet smile; for, in truth, there was blowing that morning, from the north-west, as fresh a breeze as ever yet delighted the brow of man, and the morning, altogether, was as bright and

as exhilarating as it was possible for day to be.

However, I well knew it was not the weather that was in fault, nor the air that was oppressive, but simply the mind of the complainant that was feverish and ill at ease. I could see, in every motion of the countenance, and restless turning of the body, and pallid hue of the lips, that extreme anxious restlessness of which few mortals can divest themselves when on the eve of any event of much importance—a feeling, in short, to which, with universal consent, mankind in general have given the appellation of “funking”—and which, deny it though he might, his Lordship was now undergoing in the greatest perfection, having twice, during our ride, muttered—

“I wonder if that fellow, Kingson Keenhand, will be there.”

“Why,” said I, “how can you doubt it? I dare say this is a case of great importance to the parties, and he has got a very large fee on it. They will expect him to be there—and he must—”

“—Why, yes,” said Lord George, “that

was my reasoning yesterday to Pierrepont ; but he tells me Kingson indulges in a very different style of reasoning."

" And pray, what is that?" said I.

" Why, he maintains, that, although he may receive a handsome fee upon his brief, still that is no infallible reason why he should attend ; because people don't give him that fee, he says, for being there—he doesn't take it with that notion."

" With what notion, then?" said I.

" Why, simply to retain his service, in case he *should* be able to attend."

" Well, that's cool, certainly ; but, perhaps, his eminent position entitles him to command business even on these terms, for, certainly, no man in Westminster Hall does his business better."

" But I should think the attorneys complain very loudly," said Lord George.

" Why, yes," said I, " but they have no right to do so, for the fault is their own. If they choose to prefer running after great names, and the problematical benefit of being able to have the assistance of a particular leader in one time out of ten, instead

of resorting to the numbers of men at the Bar, who, though they have less experience, still, from having less business to engross them, can be fully relied on, why, they have no right to complain. They are all fully conversant with the risk they run, when they make their own election. They can only, therefore, blame themselves if they have not taken the wisest step."

By this time we had arrived at Westminster Hall; and, getting out, proceeded to the robing-room. I had taken care that we should be in good time; and it yet wanted three minutes of the hour when the Judges take their seats.

"Ha! Dunvext, my boy!" said Charley Patrick, one of the most eloquent and witty barristers of his time, but who was too fond of a joke ever to let one die a natural death, if any effort of his could keep it upon its last legs. "Is it yourself that's come down to 'bully the Judges,' this morning?"

The colour mounted to Lord George's face, as he heard this reminder of his old speech, and, looking at Patrick, he replied—

"No, my boy! I am come down specially

to bully you, so stand clear of me, and let me get my wig."

Accordingly, his Lordship in his wig was soon arrayed, and his clerk, who was in waiting, handed him a red bag, which I, according to the old fashion at the Bar, had sent as a present to him. We next adjourned to my side, or the equity robing-room, where my old canonicals were duly endued, and thus, together, we sought the Bail Court. However, the Judge, who had just taken his seat, was busy with the motions of the day, and so would remain for the next hour.

"Now, Lord George," said I, "do you yet know from your leader what sort of a defence he intends to make?"

"By Jove!" said his Lordship, "I have never thought of the leader, or the defence either, from the time you last mentioned them to me till this very moment."

"Well, but," said I, "under these circumstances, had you not better seek him out, and, perhaps, he will tell you what course he intends to pursue, and if he himself should not be able to attend, his hints may be very valuable."

“ Well, with all my heart ; come along,” returned the junior ; and, accordingly, we went into the chief, or, as it is called, the full court of the King’s Bench, and there we saw Keenhand hard at work.

“ It is impossible,” said I, “ for you to speak to him at present ; so, suppose you write him a note, and ask him the question ; and, as leaders do not like to be bothered with their juniors more than possible, you had better say, you merely ask him in case he should not be able to attend himself, and in order that you may have the benefit of his better judgment. And, in the meanwhile, there is a friend whom I wish to see in the Exchequer, I will go and be back in half-an-hour ;” and, accordingly, I, who had considerable misgivings, as to whether it were possible that fate could let his Lordship get decently out of this scrape, even if ever so much inclined to do so, took this opportunity of searching out Pierrepoint, to whom I had involuntarily been obliged to confide the grinding of my young friend. ,

This I had done, not, I confess, with

the least hopes of hearing that he now understood the case, but rather as, a helpless resort—a sort of shift to make myself easy in the feeling, that I had done all in my power.

In hopes to hear that Lord George was not in quite such a lamentable state of incapacity with respect to his morning's work; as I feared he inevitably must be, I, at length, got hold of my old pupil, and enquired what had been the result of their mutual studies; all I received was an expressive shrug of the shoulders that spoke volumes, and in further conversation Pierrepont added, —

“ I had not believed, till now, how utterly impossible it is, to render a thorough man of pleasure, who has no deep impulses, a student even in the slightest degree; his Lordship has never given me even half-an-hour on the matter. I did persuade him, with some difficulty, to make a slight minute on his brief of the leading particulars that distinguish an ejectionment from other actions, and, this done, away he went, swearing he had effected wonders, and understood the

whole of it, and what he did not understand now, he told me, he was certain, would come to him at the moment of trial. Besides, he has got all sorts of fallacies in his head, and among the rest, the absurd one of imagining, if you ever heard anything like it, that if he gets his case into a pinch his rank will stand him in some stead, and induce the Judge to help him out of it."

"Well, I hope you told him how absurd that notion was."

"Yes, I did; but what do you think his answer was? That they wanted to persuade him the same thing when, in the navy, he went up to pass his examination in seamanship."

"Well, but there," said I, "exists a vast difference. The whole service is one of such entire slavery, that a post-captain who ventured to turn back the son of a Marquis, might never get a ship again, if his Lordship's father happened to have a friend in the Admiralty, or to vote for the government. Whereas here, though the Marquis voted for the devil, it would not help his son nor all his house."

“So I explained to George—but it was all time lost. You know what an obstinate dog he is, when he takes any thing into his head.”

“Well, but then, do you think that even at this, the eleventh hour, we could persuade him to give up his brief to some friend to hold?”

“Oh! he will not hear of it.”

“Well then, do you think there is any chance of Keenband being able to be there himself?”

“Why, he promised he would if he could, but, unfortunately, he is only mortal, and after all, cannot be in two places at once, like the memorable man who lamented that fact so strongly in *Tom Jones*.”

“Do you think the case will come on to-day?”

“No doubt! It stands third on the list, and perhaps it may be the very first called on.”

“Well then—what is to be the result of it?”

“Why, like Frederick at the battle of Mollwitz, Lord George will cover himself with glory and flour.”

“ Well, but,” said I, “ this is rather a melancholy fate for our young friend.”

“ Well, I don’t know, said Pierrepont, “ if a man is not fitted for the Bar, the sooner he finds out his error, and retrieves it by choosing some other profession, the better. And though it was I who first put this freak into Lord George’s head—still I am now convinced that it is utterly impossible he can ever succeed in the tough battle we all have to fight. He will not condescend to work in the least degree. This brief, therefore, is the best thing that could happen to him. I have not, myself, a shadow of a doubt, but that he will make some signal blunder, and will thus have forced upon him a choice of two lines of conduct. Either he must resolve to commence the same slavery as that, by which alone any of us hope to rise, or his own fiery spirits will come to his rescue, and he will cut the whole thing in disgust, for some other pursuit better adapted to his indolent turn.”

“ Well,” said I, “ your reasoning is good, and so I suppose we must philosophize thus, —Our friend is now about to be roasted at

the stake ; this must either prove him mortal by his dying, or establish his superiority to the powers of fire. If fire has no effect upon him, he may consider his fortune made as a salamander ; but, if calcined to a cinder, his sorrows are over as a man, and so any way it is for all the best. This is what some of the old Divines would term ‘ a comfortable doctrine ’ ”

CHAPTER XXII.

It is an ever fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken."

SHAKESPEARE.

PIERREPOINT smiled at my jest, as he, of course, was bound to do—it being, I consider, the least respect that a pupil can pay to his master, and the clock chiming eleven, I proposed that we should adjourn to the stake, and see how our friend bore the horrors of martyrdom! Accordingly we adjourned to the Bail Court, where we found the Jury assembling. But, as this was the place where Lord George ought to have been, here, as a matter of course, he was not.

"I hope," said I, "that funk, of which he seemed so utterly incredulous, has not

at last taken such entire possession of his mind, as to make him turn tail and run away."

"No, no," said Pierrepont, "bad as he is, he is not so bad as all that comes to, either. Most likely we shall find him in the King's Bench, sticking, as all funking juniors will, to the skirts of his leader."

"True!" I replied, "there is great probability in that. Come along, we will go and search him out," and having got into the King's Bench, a few rows behind Keenhand, there we espied my Lord George, with his face almost as white as his virgin wig—crouching down like a hare in his form, and evidently, like that poor animal, expecting his turn to be worried.

"Well, George!" said Pierrepont, who got closest to him, "how did you get on?"

"Oh!" whispered Lord George, "the devil take this infernal law of your's, I say. It's all wrong—it's all on a bad principle. It wants codifying, like the French law."

"Does it?" said Pierrepont, somewhat surprised to hear his Lordship discourse so learnedly on the subject. "You must have

cribbed that idea from Brougham. Why, what's the matter now?"

"Why, everything is the matter. I sent, a few minutes since, a note to Keenhand, to ask him what line he thought of adopting for his defence?"

"What was his reply?"

"Why, here it is," said Lord George, holding out a most hurried scrawl for Pierrepont to read; which he did, as follows:—

"DEAR LORD GEORGE,

"Ours must be a sporting defence—the game.

"Yours ever, in haste,

"KINGSON KEENHAND."

"Die game, is it?" said Lord George. "Well, I couldn't exactly make out, whether it was '*die* game,' or '*see* game.' But all I know is this, I have been looking through the whole article '*game*,' both in Blackstone and Burn's Justice, and I can't find a word that relates to any such case as ours."

"I should think not, indeed!" replied Pierrepont, who, like myself, was convulsed

with laughter at hearing this most simple confession.

“What the devil are you both laughing at?” said his Lordship, evidently not very well pleased at our mirth.

“Why, my dear fellow,” said we, still more amused with his anger, “would you wish us to expire instead of our merriment? Here have you been hunting through the whole of an article, that has no more connexion with the matter you want, than if you had been consulting the Astronomical Almanac.”

“Oh, you be hanged!” said Lord George, somewhat angrily. “Doesn’t Keenhand’s note say, it is to be ‘a *sporting* defence;’ besides, here is the very word ‘*game*’ pointed out.”

“That may be; but the only game in this case, is the game that has been made of you. Now, don’t look so fierce, George; only the other day, you swore, that any one might laugh at you, and now you won’t indulge even a friend with a titter. All that Keenhand meant by a *sporting* defence, is this—that, in reality, you have no defence

to the action to make. In other words, that, though there is no doubt you have been very much aggrieved, and that it has been very cruel to bring the action against you, and so forth, yet that still, in law, the other man has by far the best of it; and, either you are unable to prove your own case, or cannot hope to knock down the strong one your adversary has to set up."

"But look at the word '*game*,' my dear fellow."

"Precisely—the note is quite consistent. When Keenhand says, you have only a '*sporting* defence,' he means, that you must defend yourself in the best way the fortunes of war will allow, and look out for any chance that will turn up; that's what we term a sporting defence. And, as to dying game, I need not tell you what that is; the expression used here, means no more than if he had said—die at bay."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed his Lordship, as he closed the ill-treated Blackstone, with a suppressed oath. "What a fool Keenhead must be, in a serious matter like this, to send me a joking answer."

“Nay,” said I, “don’t you think that if Keenhand had heard all that has passed, he would be inclined to say, and with some justice, too, that if there were a fool in the case, he must be sought in the man who could make any blunder in so plain a communication. Come, come, my Lord, confess you are in a devil of a stew.”

“Why, no!—oh, no!” persisted Lord George, “it isn’t that; but, devil take it, what a heated dog-hole this court is. One cannot get a breath of fresh air in it; how stiff and formal they all look, with their infernal horse-hair top-knots on! Let us get out, to inhale a breath of oxygen; for, if I stay much longer in such an atmosphere as this, I shall expire of humanity.”

Just as Lord George expressed his intention of getting out of court, a dapper young man was seen to creep reverentially up within hearing of Keenhand, his looks betokening considerable excitement, while he held a large bundle of papers in his hand.

“Our case, Sir, stands next on the list in the Bail Court, if you will be kind enough to go there.”

“Impossible, Mr. Smithson, I shall be engaged here for the next hour and a half.”

“Well, but, my dear Sir, it is a most important case for us, and we relied on you.”

“Very possibly, Mr. Smithson, so do my present clients.”

“Well, Sir, but then you give them the preference.”

“Nine points of the law, Mr. Smithson, they have got me—quite the same to me where I pass my mornings, whether they are talked away in the King’s Bench or the Bail Court.”

“Yes, Sir; but we so relied on you, in this case.”

“Very true, and so may fifty others, but you see chance has decided against them all but this; there, that will do now, go away, and look up my junior; make a good fight with him as long as you can, and perhaps I may be able to come in, and say a few words to the jury—that will do—go.”

And here the attorney who defended the ejection case, seemed to think himself a most unfortunate person, shook his head—shrugged up his shoulders mournfully—

drew down the corners of his mouth in a most lachrymose manner, and still muttering, —

“We relied on you, Sir; we relied on you.” ‘Away he went to seek out that ill-destined youth the junior.

Keenhand, who seemed to care nothing whether the attorney was pleased or angry, went on with the case, then in hand—some heavy argument concerning a mandamus, which would nearly last for the rest of the day. I had often met Keenhand before, casually, in society, but never had scrutinised him so narrowly as on this morning in question.

He was of rather small stature, and very dark; he possessed a most intellectual countenance—the eye being of a piercing hazel, while the outline of his features, in profile at least, presented one of the most classical faces to be found in Westminster Hall, being, indeed, almost a resemblance of more than one of those composed and dignified aspects, that are to be seen in the celebrated picture of the trial of Lord William Russell. The chin was full—the nose slightly aqu-

line—the forehead capacious ; any good judge of mankind might, from his mere aspect, have selected him as a person of ability ; his talents, also, were exactly of that order which seemed warranted by his expression.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“Patience, unmoved, no marvel though she pause ;
They can be meek, that have no other cause.”

Comedy of Errors.

MANY people, who are mere spectators of the business at the Bar, think there is nothing like that fiery noise and impetuosity which often distinguish young men at their outset ; but those who know what is the real work to be got through, admire a calm, quiet, steady manner which nothing ruffles nor disturbs, and, more than all, which nothing escapes. All this Keenhand possessed to perfection—his voice was very melodious—his sentences well arranged—his manners the most self-possessed possible, untinctured by presumption—his style of speaking slow, clear, and commanding, with

a dignity of presence and argument inseparable from such a combination; added to all this, there was in Kingson Keenhand a total absence of any of that moroseness, or discourtesy, which so often renders genius and ability disagreeable, so that, perhaps in the whole profession, there were few men more likely to command success, or more deserving of it.

Little wonder then, was it, that Keenhand held his own position so determinately, and when men ran after him for the benefit they were likely to derive from the acquaintance, he estimated this tribute of selfishness at its proper worth, and never put himself out of the way to make it any extraordinary return. The large amount of business that poured in upon him, rendered it quite impossible that he could attend to every one—he therefore allowed chance to take its course; what he did, he did admirably, and that which he was obliged to leave to his junior was, we suppose, resigned to fortune. And, after all, there was a great deal of justice in what he said, “that men paid for the *chance* of his being able

to attend to them," and no doubt his being able to lay down such a doctrine, was a high position to enjoy.—But woe attend any inferior spirit, who should aspire to the superiority of such a dictum !

When the attorney left Keenhand, he looked anxiously round the Court for a few seconds, then spying out Lord George, at once made for him.

"Oh! my Lord, are you in this Court?" said he, addressing his junior with a sort of *quasi* reproof, for having deserted his post, which, properly speaking, was to watch the approach of the battle on its proper field. "I expect our case is being called on this moment, my Lord."

"Well, but," said Lord George, "Mr. Keenhand is not gone."

"No!" said the attorney most ruefully, "he says 'that he cannot get away at present—and therefore', he says, 'he is obliged to confide the conduct of the defence to you, my Lord.'"

"To me!" repeated Lord George with most deliberate horror—and in a low voice, while his lips whitened rapidly as he spoke.

“Yes, my Lord, to you,” replied the solicitor, “will you be kind enough to come and do your best?”

“O! ah! yes, certainly,” and our friend struggled most manfully to hide that direful sinking that we could plainly perceive was weighing him to the very earth, and rendering him so confused, that he scarcely knew what he was saying—a fact sufficiently evident; when he exclaimed to the attorney, on extricating himself from the seat in which he was wedged—

“Mr. Keenhand not attend to his brief?—but I must *insist* that he comes and leads me in this case.”

The idea of a junior *insisting* on his leader doing anything was too much for the countenances of Pierrepont and myself, and we neither of us could help indulging in a smile of sincere merriment, at a declaration so very rich in its way.

“I wish, my Lord, your influence may be sufficient to induce Mr. Keenhand to come to us; but I fear he is so engrossed in his present case, there are no hopes of it.”

“Well,” said Lord George, we will first

of all go and learn if the case is actually called on, and then see what is to be done,” and with that most deluded bundle of foolscap faced with red tape under his arm, denominated his first brief, away he sallied.

At once rising and moving slowly in Lord George's rear, Pierrepont and myself forthwith followed, and in a few minutes we all stood in the densely thronged area of the Bail Court of the King's Bench.

Just as we entered we found the Jury turning round to consult on the last case, and the usher of the court calling out in a loud voice—

“Doc on the demise of Higgins.”

“Here,” answered the shrill pipe of the attorney, while Lord George, as I thought, made a slight movement with his hand, as if to stop his client from proclaiming the horrible fact that he was there at hand, and ready to proceed. However, it was too late.

“What is it—‘Doc on’ the demise of Higgins?” said a sharp, merry, twinkling, wide awake counsel, who came bustling into court at the words, and who was the

well known Mr. Pleadit, counsel for the plaintiff. But now, Lord George, who, no doubt, experienced in its extreme horror that feeling of “funking,” which he had before ventured to doubt, at once cried out to the Judge—

“Oh, my Lord, Mr. Keenhand is in that case, and he is engaged in the full court.”

“Yes, but I imagine Lord George Dumvext is his junior,” said the Judge, in a tone of voice that seemed to strike upon George’s ear as somewhat familiar, while he could not help feeling flattered that he was already so well known as it were in the profession, that the Judge should be aware of his being junior in a particular case, an honour for which he knew the great host of juniors at large might sigh for years, and sigh in vain.

“Yes, my Lord,” replied Lord George, smiling and hesitating, “I do happen to be in the case — but—a difficult case — my Lord—Mr Keenhand, my leader—should not wish to go on in his absence,”—and so on muttered his Lordship, proceeding to

hint rather than state, and that very indistinctly, that he should like an adjournment.

“Oh! my Lord,” said Mr. Justice Witieman, “I am sure you will most entirely fill up Mr. Keenhand’s place.”

“Oh! really, my Lord,” quoth Lord George, once more trying to get out of it, “a heavy case, my Lord, if your Lordship could postpone till Mr. Keenhand’s arrival—”

“Postpone, my Lord!” interrupted the merry looking Pleadit, in a tone of admirably imitated astonishment, “it is only my Lord George’s bashfulness at his first brief, my Lord! I am sure he will do it most remarkably well!”

Lord George turned round to look at Pleadit at this moment, and wished him and his good humour most heartily at the devil; however, to the devil Pleadit neither went nor thought of going. Neither fire nor brimstone; nor even a particle of smoke came to his aid, to take away that most untiring antagonist Pleadit, who, still on the broad grin, continued to assure his Lordship—that there was “not the least possible

occasion for a postponement of the trial, as no one could do it more justice than his noble and learned friend."

That noble and learned friend being all the while engaged grinding his teeth in excessive rage, at what he mentally styled Pleadit's infernal impudence!

Alas! he knew little of the arduous profession of the Bar, if he could thus misstyle that quality, the most difficult and invaluable that can be attained by the long robe, but which it modestly softens into the term SELF CONFIDENCE. However, in the midst of all this outcry, the Judge turned round to the usher, and said—

"Let Mr. Keenhand be summoned from the King's Bench; tell him his case is waiting for him here. We will give Mr Keenhand five minutes, Mr. Pleadit," he continued, addressing the counsel for the plaintiff, "and then, if he cannot come, we shall have great pleasure in hearing you, my Lord George," and there seemed to be, and more than one observed it, though Lord George did not, a smile of most peculiar pleasure upon the face of the Judge, as he

said these words—and then quietly turning to his note book, prepared to go into the case. Meanwhile the jury were re-sworn, and the witnesses began to collect in their proper places, while, with many a pleasant joke, and subdued laugh, that had a most woeful sound on Lord George's ear, Pleadit turned alternately to his junior, and rustled over the pages before him.

During the lapse of the five minutes, an unusual indulgence, which Wittiman had so kindly granted to soothe the maiden junior's excited feelings, we will take a momentary glance at the exterior of his well known and formidable opponent.

In age, Mr. Pleadit might be about two and fifty; he was a good portly person, and his face possessed that frank, winning-humoured sort of countenance, that immediately interests all beholders in its harmless mirth, and forms the tacit warranty that the owner is possessed of every kindly and good natured feeling. There had originally been many natural obstacles in the path of Pleadit, both as an orator and an advocate; yet, in spite of all these, he had overcome

every difficulty, and had attained a degree of popularity more extensive even than that of Keenhand; though, of course, different in its style. Pleadit, moreover, had gained a great deal of his business from being known to possess a quality, the absence of which was the only draw-back against Keenhand, namely, Pleadit, was said to be extremely scrupulous, in always attending, personally, to every brief entrusted to his charge, a virtue that ought certainly to be as much as possible cultivated by every advocate, though it is utterly out of the question, that it can be long practised by any one in the enjoyment of a distinguished business, and even Pleadit, therefore, had been gradually forced into the same current which bore on other men, and was occasionally compelled to hand over his briefs to others, or allow his juniors to make their fight in his stead.

Still, wherever it was possible to present his portly person in the van, with the most praiseworthy attention he contrived to do so, and on the present occasion, as we have before said, there he stood, laughing and

cracking his jokes, to the great horror of that noble unfortunate Lord George. Plead-it's voice being so powerful, that it is narrated of him as an historical fact, that when he once visited St. Paul's, and took some country relations to view the vastness of Wren's architecture, having been tempted into the playfulness of trying the whispering gallery, St. Paul's clock, that was so unfortunate as to strike twelve during the operation, became lost and inaudible beneath the might of Pleadit's whisper. It is right to add—this case is not to be found even in Carrington and Payne, of which omission the learned, aye, and even the unlearned reader may, if he likes, give the defendant the benefit.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“Shall I compare thee to a Lammas day,
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May.”

SHAKESPEARE.

Now, touching the aforesaid Learned Counsel, there has long been a great diversity of doctrine in Westminster Hall, whether it was of Pleadit or of the learned and amiable Sergeant Bowwow, that the grave Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas made his well-known witticism; whoever the party was, his presence was required before his Lordship, and it was said, as an excuse for his non-attendance, that he was speaking in the Bail Court. Now, between the Bail Court and the Common Pleas, intervenes the Exchequer, a large court, interposing the thickness of several walls, to say nothing of the thickness of

some of the heads that a keen search might there discover.

“Speaking in the Bail Court!” said the Chief Justice, slowly; “I think that must be impossible, for I do not hear him.”

However, on the present occasion, it appeared to Lord George that Pleadit’s voice was never so loud and strong, and his inclination for joking never so uproarious as this morning distinguished him; and that cruel skit of saying, “how well his Lordship would do his first brief,” was the bitterest gall of all, and turning round to Pierrepoint, George said—

“That was devilish malicious of Pleadit to say anything about my maiden brief! how did he know anything about it?”

“I am afraid, George,” replied Pierrepoint, “notwithstanding all your assumed courage, you are yet remarkably young, exceedingly verdurous in all that relates to your new profession, which, be you pleased to know, is essentially one of the tongue; and, therefore, there exists no fact, however minute, among members of the Bar however distinguished, with which each man

present is not most fully conversant. Always act upon the belief that every man knows everything, and you have then some slight chance of going right. To take any other course than this would lead you most inevitably wrong, but here comes the usher."

"Mr. Keenhand cannot come, Sir," said the functionary, observing Lord George's anxious look.

"Stay," whispered his Lordship; "do not say that the five minutes are up yet; just be quiet."

"Mr. Smithson," turning to the attorney, "I wish you would go yourself to Mr. Keenhand, and say I request, as a particular favour, that he will come and do this defence; and, Mr. Smithson, just add that Mr. Pleadit has told his Lordship it's my first brief, and after that, you know, it's quite impossible that any man can do justice to his case."

"Well, Sir, I will go," said the attorney, and accordingly off he set.

"Is Mr. Keenhand coming?" enquired the Judge, with that peculiar intonation with which Lord George had so especially amused the stranger of Roehampton.

"We have sent a second messenger for him, my Lord," said Dunvext.

"Very well, very well," replied his Lordship, going on with his notes, or whatever it might be that occupied him. A few minutes more rolled away.

"Come, my Lord George," said the joking Pleadit; "you had better let us get to work; no man ever had such a chance before, for a maiden brief—here is the jury, who have been getting ready their pocket-handkerchiefs for you, for the last half hour. Never mind waiting for Mr. Keenhand; think what a passionate appeal you may make to the Box."

Lord George bowed stiffly, but said nothing; the truth was, as several men perceived, he had rather over-rated his own courage, and now bitterly felt the reaction. At this moment, however, to stop all further suspense and debate—more painful than the worst reality—back came the attorney.

"No, my Lord," said the attorney, very angrily, "Mr. Keenhand says it is utterly impossible for him to come; and, as to its being your Lordship's first brief," he added,

in a lower voice, "he says that is so much the more honour for your Lordship."

"As for me," muttered the attorney, "I vow and declare, he shall never have another brief again from my hands ;" a resolution to which the worthy attorney had sworn six times, at least, during every term, for the last five years—a fact that has occasioned some doubts in learned minds, whether a certain classical passage has not been wrongly translated, and instead of running—"At lovers' perjuries Jove laughs ;" it ought not to be—"at attorneys' perjuries Jove laughs," for, to most men's experience, whenever a solicitor has vowed that he never will give that Mr. Snooks another brief—it always moves to this end, that, on the very next possible opportunity, Mr. Snooks is holding, in his crowded hand, a large bundle of papers, whereon are inscribed, in prominent letters, the name and address, &c. &c. of the very same adjuring solicitor ; while, if any attorney comes and tells you that you have greatly obliged him, or done a brief remarkably well, beware—too credulous youth beware !—of that which must inevitably fol-

low the very next brief that the Syren has to deliver—of unusual importance or desirable lucre—he will not only abstain from delivering to you, but pick out in your own mind that man you have heard him most warily abuse, and at the first convenient opportunity, when you are passing by, lift up your modest, downcast eyes, and there, in the hand where you were so foolish as least to have expected it, there shall you behold the paper and the tape; there—oh, vilest climax—there, or in the pocket thereof, shall be found—if it be paid—the *fee*. Some well-meaning people, not at the Bar, but possibly fathers — mothers — brothers or cousins, having relations in the eloquent profession, may hereat exclaim :—

“Oh, how shocking!” But it is in vain that you would upbraid. Such is—such ever has been, and such, no doubt, ever will remain—the nature of man.

“Well, well,” said Mr. Justice Wittie-man, now beginning to exhibit a little impatience, and no wonder, “is Mr. Keenhand coming—or is he not?”

“No, my Lord; he can’t come,” very

naively said Pleadit, who did not seem to care who came or who staid, provided only the case came on, and he got his verdict—that most delicious thing, the gaining of which makes amends for all mishaps to him who wears a wig and gown. Lord George was, however, about to offer some further interruption to the proceedings, but Pierre-point pulled him by the gown on one side, whispering—

“You can’t help it.”

While the Judge, on the other, briefly said—“Very well, then, go on Mr. Pleadit; Lord George, I have no doubt, will get on quite as well without his leader as with him.”

An observation which, by the way, was capable of two very different interpretations. However, Lord George, who—the moment that he heard the other junior’s voice opening the pleadings, and thence knew that the matter was now inevitable—grew much more collected, took as a compliment this speech of the learned and illustrious personage he had so lately been styling “Johnny;” and away all parties bowled for the verdict.

The junior having finished, Mr. Pleadit began. There was one thing very remarkable about Pleadit's face; and, if the many thousands who yearly inspect it, will only look for this peculiarity, they must at once perceive that it not only has the faculty of appearing to laugh, but absolutely to cry at the same time. 'The eyes—the brows—the cheek-bones, are all in a broad roar; but, at the same moment, nothing can possibly be more lugubrious than the mouth, which is drawn down very much at the corners, and seems to intimate that its owner is at least one of the most amiable ill-used men in the world; and such, generally, is the mixed character of his addresses to the Jury.

Pleadit contrives, with an admirable mastery of his weapons, to persuade the potential twelve, that, while his client is the most ill-treated man in the world, he himself is one of the merriest and jolliest of all fellows, either in or out of it, and that nothing would delight him more than to have a quiet crack with the whole of them, only provided they would simply believe

him, upon his word and honour, that he really ought to have this particular verdict for which he is asking ; and that granted, he desires nothing more ; or, in his own words, “ simple justice.” Accordingly, in the present instance, he commenced to paint, in the strongest terms, the atrocity of Lord George’s client, until his Lordship mentally concluded that, saving the fact of having sent his Lordship his first brief, he must be one of the most unmitigated vagabonds in existence. When Pleadit concluded, he said—

“ I shall only detain you a very short time, by merely calling one witness, who will prove all the facts of the case ; and who, Gentlemen,” added Pleadit, “ I shall afterwards leave to the unequalled dexterity of my learned friend, who is opposed to me, to handle, in cross-examination, with all that extreme severity which I know to be in his power. I shall leave my learned friend to exert all that crushing moral strength which he holds so confidently in his possession. He may turn—he may twist—he may even terrify him, if he will, and I shall defy my learned friend, after

all, to extract out of that witness one single particle of anything like dishonourable confession—anything, in short, that can derogate from the spotless character which, I am instructed, he has always hitherto borne, or, indeed, the least particle of matter that can warrant you in entertaining the slightest doubt as to his testimony. You will then see how grievously my client has been wronged.”

“Look at the excellent client who has been so much wronged,” whispered, to Lord George, the attorney for the defendant, pointing to the most villainous looking character sitting just below Pleadit, who, had he known where to look for him, or ever had an opportunity of forming the least notion of what his client was really like, would have felt a convulsive spasm of nature arrest the words in his throat, when he called such an animal respectable looking or excellent. But of this Pleadit knew nothing, and, as the sequel turned out, it would have been fortunate for Lord George, had his Lordship known less. However, Pleadit went on to say :—

“In conclusion, gentlemen, when you have learned, by such unimpeachable testimony, the very great cause which my client has to complain, it will, I say, then be open to my learned and able friend to call before you, if he can anywhere discover them, some witnesses to contravene those broad facts that I assert. In that case, I shall again have to address you, if not, I have only to beg of you not to be led away by my friend’s seductive eloquence, nor to allow his nervous force and energy to lead you from those main points you have to consider, and which the testimony adduced for the plaintiff will have proved.”

Pleadit then called John Brown.—A very respectably dressed man here stood forward in the witness-box, with a white neckcloth and black coat, and, having been sworn, proceeded glibly enough to answer Pleadit’s questions, for, in the majority of cases, Pleadit, wherever it was possible, wisely preferred examining his own witnesses, to trusting them into the hands of any other man. This witness examined, Pleadit resumed his seat, and began to look

at another brief, as if it was quite impossible that anything could now be elicited to shake this witness's evidence. Meanwhile, Lord George saw that his turn was come to cross-examine, but in that dread moment, that apprehension, that funk at which he had laughed with so much contempt, in the hour when danger was absent, now took such an entire possession of his mind, that he seemed utterly unable even to rise, much less to utter a word, and certainly wished his first case—his first client—his benign attorney—the witness—the jury, and, doubtless, many others connected with this torture, at least “five fathoms under the Rialto.”

Pleadit looked askance from under his ample cyebrows, well knowing how much was at stake, but never manifesting this knowledge in his looks, and then, without appearing to see anything but his second brief, which had no connection with the question at issue, silyly observed,—

“I suppose you have nothing to say to him, Lord George?”

END OF VOL. I.

